

WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



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FREE

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk October 11, 2015

Mid edition No 681

FLYPAST

Where to spot Vulcan final flight

Cold War bomber in our skies today

TRAVEL

How can we tackle deer deaths on our roads?

Warning to be extra vigilant over the coming weeks

CULTURE

007's bond with county

How Ian Fleming weaved Kent into agent's adventures

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By George, will rates vow deliver any real relief?

PERHAPS it is just what we have become used to with our responses to today's modern politics; a scepticism drenched in a thick layer of pessimism.

But when the chancellor George Osborne this week announced local authorities could pocket their business rates to swell their own coffers, few will have placed any sizeable bets on our councils emerging quids in.

He may have hailed it a vital shot in the arm to local councils whose veins barely pulse with the lifeblood of public funding anymore, but do any of us, regardless of political affiliation genuinely believe this will not be a case of giving with one hand... and sneaking it out of our back pocket with the other?

The savagery of the austerity cuts to our town halls - and indeed county hall - has been relentless over the last few years.

Each week seems



Editor **Chris Britcher**

to bring with it news of another reduction, another slashed budget. And all the time it remains easy to point a finger of blame at local decision-makers now trying to spread an ever diminishing cash pot around communities which continue to grow in size.

Local politics, generally, is a far more watered down version of the Westminster political divide. The ideological drum beats from on high, but the reality is that, for the most part, local councils are manned by local people simply wanting the best for the places they live.

I have expressed fears in the past that we will never, regardless of the colour of party in power, see our local services revived once the economy recovers to the extent we have enjoyed in recent years. And that, perhaps above all the cuts, is the harshest and most painful of them all.

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Contents

News

05 Vulcan jet's farewell tour

Look to the skies this afternoon for flypast

11 Backlash at PM on schools

David Cameron wants all schools academies

12 Deer strikes on our roads

Could we adopt paint on ponies plan?

16 Perils of level crossings

Fresh warning to take extra care on the rails

19 Charging for plastic bags

Campaign group calls for more to be done

20 Battle over harbour site

War of words breaks out in Whitstable

22 Python is recovered

Found! Missing snake spotted up a tree

23 Run's splash of colour

Hever Castle goes a multi-coloured hue as Run or Dye arrives



PAGE 5 »



PAGE 20 »



PAGE 19 »



PAGE 22 »



PAGE 12 »



PAGE 23 »



PAGE 55 »

The Arts

31 Theatre gets £1.5m boost

West Kent venue gets major refurbishment

34 Bronte ballet reviewed

Wuthering Heights at the Marlowe Theatre

Sport

55 Can Shakey get fifth title?

Swale ace aims for glory at Brands Hatch

Plus

Letters Page 46

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Autumn Savings

New Store, New Collections



New instore
this Autumn



New instore
this Autumn



New instore
this Autumn



New instore
this Autumn



New instore
this Autumn

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New Sittingbourne Store

Lukehursts, which already has a flagship store in Rainham, Kent, purchased the freehold to a 14,000 sq ft building close to its existing site at Sittingbourne Retail Park. The former toy store in Eurolink Way, Sittingbourne, has been upgraded into a bright, modern split level showroom for a wide range of furniture and fabrics.

With free parking for more than 30 cars it is a third bigger than the previous Sittingbourne store, and will display a much wider range of products by big brand names like Stressless, G-Plan, Celebrity and Hypnos to name but a few.

New Collections

Over the last few years it has become increasingly popular to mix and match living room furniture. In particular there is a trend towards experimenting with sofas and chairs in the same or complementary ranges, but choosing different textures and colours, rather than opting for the traditional matching three piece suite. Lukehursts have introduced separate galleries devoted to Stressless furniture, Alexander James leather and fabrics and Celebrity sofas and recliners. To compliment these new ranges we have also introduced a brand new Custom made curtain gallery, which offers an exciting collection of fabrics and styles, made to your measurements and available in just 10 days.

New Website

E-commerce is an important part of today's retail scene and we want to offer that service at Lukehursts. In September we launched our "new look" interactive website www.lukehurst.co.uk with the ability to purchase many products at competitive sale prices on line. Products which can be purchased via the website range from beds & bedroom furniture to Dining & Lounge furniture.

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High Street, Rainham ME8 7JH.

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How to spot Cold War jet on its farewell tour today

By Luke May

luke.may@archant.co.uk

A CLASSIC Cold War aircraft will make a dramatic final tour across Kent today – giving hundreds of thousands the chance to bid farewell to an iconic aircraft.

And it will be flown by a pilot from Maidstone.

Dubbed 'the spirit of Great Britain' the Avro Vulcan XH558 first flew for the RAF in 1960.

Originally designed to carry a UK atomic bomb far enough to drop on Russia in the event of an attack, it was one of the largest and most deadly of all aircraft.

It came to symbolise the deterrents deployed by the nuclear nations during the Cold War.

The plane is expected to fly over Kent between 1.30pm and 2.30pm, weather permitting. However, at the time of going to press, organisers were keen to keep the precise timings as rough estimates.

Retired in 1995, enthusiasts raised £7 million to get it back in the air in 2007. Since then, it has become a big draw at air displays courtesy of its sheer scale and distinctive delta-wing design.



MAJESTIC: The Avro Vulcan XH558 coming your way today. Pic: Eric Coeckelberghs/Vulcan to the Sky Trust

But it will cease all operations later this month after the companies which provide the technical support to keep the craft airworthy announced they were having to withdraw their support due to the craft's age.

To mark the occasion, it has a two-day farewell tour which started on Saturday as it took off from Doncaster, travelled up the east coast into Scotland and then around the north of England.

Today, it will take off from Doncaster and head south until it reaches Gravesend.

Then it will skirt around much of the county, taking in Whitstable, Herne Bay, Manston, Dover and Ashford before heading west.

Kent spectators last saw the plane in August at the Herne Bay Airshow. Captain Bill Ramsey, who grew up in Maidstone, will be behind the controls: "I've flown the plane 63 times, and Sunday will be my 64th.

"There is a certain amount of sadness in seeing it go, but we've had a lot of time to get used to it."

The plane, since restoration, has been looked after by the Vulcan to the Sky Trust, which has raised the £2m a year needed to keep it in the air – all funded by public donations.

For the latest timings of the flight above Kent keep an eye on the trust's Twitter feed of @XH558 and on our website at www.kentnews.co.uk

Will creek flooding be a thing of the past after defences work agreed?

SWALE council chiefs have given the nod for improved flood defences this week in a bid to protect properties at risk of Faversham Creek breaking its banks.

Homes along Front Brents have seen flooding four times in the last 60 years.

Councillors gave the green light to approving a contractor to build the scheme at a cabinet meeting.

The initiative will involve building a raised bund – an earth and clay barrier – between 60 to 80cm high. The bund will run along the length of the Front Brents, turning east before Crab Island. It would be grassed over, with movable flood gates which would allow access to the creek itself.

The cash to fund the scheme is coming from the Environment Agency, with more cash being added to the pot by residents pooling their share of the repair and renew government grant funds.

Mike Cosgrove, cabinet member for regeneration at the council, said:

"Front Brents has been badly flooded five times in the last 60 years, and the tidal surge in 2013 showed that this work is urgently needed.

"Thanks to the support of government agencies, Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council, Faversham Town Council and local residents, the plans are proceeding well, and once a contractor is appointed we are a step closer to getting the work done."

The Environment Agency and the East Kent Engineering Partnership are preparing to submit a planning application for the bund.

There will then be a formal consultation on the proposals. They will follow up informal consultations that have already taken place held in the local area – these have already resulted in some design adjustments.

Work to build the bund itself is unlikely to take place before next spring, but the Environment Agency says that it has emergency plans in place if there is a flood risk over the wet autumn and winter months.

Town agrees to accept 250 Syrian refugees to aid crisis

UP TO 250 Syrian refugees are going to be housed in Ashford after the council unanimously agreed to assist the humanitarian crisis.

The borough voted on welcoming 50 refugees a year for the next five years, as part of the government's scheme to accommodate those fleeing the war-torn county.

They will be housed in private rented accommodation and not

utilising the council's housing stock. In addition, the government has vowed to reimburse the financial costs to the authority – and as a result the local taxpayer.

It is anticipated the first of the families may arrive before Christmas. Conservative council leader Gerry Clarkson said: "I firmly believe Ashford must stand ready to play its part."

Bridge closures warning for resurfacing work this week

MOTORISTS are being warned of delays due to closures of the Rochester Bridge this week to allow for resurfacing works.

The first closure will take place on Monday, October 12, between 9pm and 5.30am. Then from Tuesday to Thursday, the access to the New Bridge carrying traffic from Strood to Rochester will be closed from 9pm until 5.30am.

A signed diversion will be in place which will direct traffic through the A289 Medway Tunnel where necessary. Pedestrians will still be able to cross the bridges.

The closures are to enable Medway Council to safely carry out their resurfacing works in Strood High Street. Lines on the New Bridge will also be repainted during the carriageway closures.



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Suffragette movie shot scenes in the county

MERYL Streep's latest movie, *Suffragette*, opens this week with several scenes shot in Kent.

The film, which has received positive reviews from the critics, had its premiere in London this week - an event which hit the headlines after a feminist group staged a major protest, laying on the red carpet to highlight cuts to domestic violence services.

Filmmakers shot several scenes at the Historic Dockyard Chatham in February of this year.

The film features Meryl Streep as Emmeline Pankhurst, the celebrated leader of the suffragette movement, and Carey Mulligan as activist Maud Watts. Ms Mulligan has previously appeared in *The Great Gatsby* and *Far From the Madding Crowd*.



RACERS: Drivers pick up their awards

'Business as usual' at top tourist venue but blow as fireworks cancelled

By Chris Murphy

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

FEARS a popular tourist attraction was to close its doors have been lifted this week after a new firm was drafted in to take over its operation.

There were concerns the Kent Life farm park, near Maidstone, was set to shut up shop and staff lose their jobs when York-based Continuum Attractions confirmed its contract would end at the end of next month.

An announcement on its website confirmed it would end its association with the venue at the end of November and that it had cancelled its major fireworks display.

Maidstone Borough Council owns the 28-acre park at Lock Lane, Sandling. But after its existing contract with Continuum was due for renewal, it was put out to tender with Continuum opting not to bid again.

Hampshire-based Planning Solutions Ltd will take over the running of the attraction.

A spokesman at Continuum,



CHANGE: No fireworks this year

which also runs the popular, long-running Canterbury Tales attraction in the cathedral city, told us: "Kent Life is not closing, but we are withdrawing from operating it.

"When it came up for tender there

were things that we found were restrictive to our proposal, so unfortunately we won't be doing it.

"We loved operating Kent Life and we did bid but unfortunately the new outline conditions didn't work for us so we chose to withdraw from operating."

The Continuum spokesman added: "We have a good relationship with Kent and want to continue working in the county. There are no sour grapes. It just didn't work out this time."

A spokesman for Maidstone council said: "Outwardly, the public will not notice anything - everything will be carrying on as normal."

"We have had an excellent relationship with Continuum and we wish them well in all of their other ventures. No staff are at risk and will all transfer over to the new operator."

Michael Strickland, boss at Planning Solutions, added: "I'm looking forward to investing in and developing the site to provide a fantastic experience for our visitors."

Family's agony over death of Avril Burr

THE family of a 60-year-old woman killed after being hit by a car as she walked her dog in Otford, say her death has "stopped their worlds".

Avril Burr had been walking along Pilgrims Way around 7.30am on Friday, October 2, when she was hit by a silver Perodua Nippra.

Rushed to hospital by air ambulance, she later died. The dog was uninjured.

In a statement the family said: "Avril was born in Canterbury and had lived in Sevenoaks since she was 11.

"In her family life she has been a devoted mother to her two children, who together with their partners gave Avril her greatest joy of five grandchildren. She also leaves her long term partner Barry, and her twin brother devastated with this sudden loss that has stopped their worlds.

"She was a successful business woman, and built an award winning business in accountancy services that has been in Sevenoaks for 26 years."

Kent Big Weekend dates for 2016 fixed

THE dates for next year's annual free ticket giveaway, the Kent Big Weekend, have been confirmed.

Organised by the county's tourism champions, Visit Kent, the two-day event sees thousands of tickets handed out to those living in the county for local attractions.

The hope is that they will then spread the word to visitors and friends from outside of the county to come while also discovering the delights on our doorstep.

Next year's event will take place on March 12 and 13, with destinations wanting to take part now urged to sign up for what will be the tenth Big Weekend.

Last year, more than 100 big and small attractions donated tickets to the online ballot, and more than 105,000 people registered for 20,000 free tickets.

Previous years have seen ticket donations from Canterbury Cathedral, Dover Castle, Howletts Wild Animal Park and Port Lympne Reserve, Hever Castle, Turner Contemporary, Leeds Castle, The Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Penshurst Place and multiple National Trust properties.

Kent Test results are out this Wednesday

RESULTS of the Kent Test will be revealed this week - ending a nervous wait for pupils and parents alike.

Youngsters in Year 6 sat the 11-plus exam last month. Securing a suitable score will allow parents to apply for a grammar school place.

The results will be emailed to those who registered online on Wednesday. Letters will then be mailed out to arrive on Thursday for all those who sat the exam.

Meanwhile, the outcome of the Medway Test was revealed this week, with more than 1,000 now in a race to secure a berth at a grammar school.

In total, 1,126 children were assessed as being eligible for a grammar school place - just under half of those who sat the test - and just 712 of them came from Medway. The majority were from Kent where places especially in the west of the county are squeezed by applicants from the London boroughs and East Sussex.

Students took the test last month. Cllr Mike O'Brien, Medway council's portfolio holder for children's services, wished all those who passed well.

KCC chiefs praise generosity over asylum-seeking children

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

GENEROUS offers of time, gifts and accommodation to help the rise in unaccompanied children entering the county seeking asylum.

Earlier this summer the number of young migrants arriving in Kent almost doubled over a three month period.

Once they arrive, they fall under the wing of Kent County Council's social services team.

And since the migrant crisis became headline news, County Hall chiefs say more than 170 offers have been received.

Offers have ranged from accommodation in people's own homes, sports equipment, DVDs, children's toys, to foster carers, football coaches and teachers.

Peter Oakford, KCC cabinet member for specialist children's services, said: "We have been overwhelmed with the amazing generosity from so many people all around the UK.

"Many churches have called offering to provide volunteers or items young people might need, individuals have approached us offering items they can donate or even offering a room and many teachers, foster carers and football coaches have offered their services.

"As a result of offers from teachers to provide lessons we are putting together a struc-



AUTHORITY: County Hall said it has been 'overwhelmed' by the support

tured programme of learning for young people in the reception centres.

"It is humbling to know there are so many incredibly kind people and organisations willing to help these young people who arrive in our country seeking refuge. The response has exceeded even our wildest expectations; to have received so many offers, I would like to say a big, big thank you to everyone who has been in touch with us, we are so grateful.

"For anyone still keen to donate items, we suggest sports equipment, easy-reading

books to help with English lessons, board games and for younger refugee children in our care colouring crayons, colouring books and DVDs for the under-15s. All these items would be a great help."

A number of foster parents have come forward seeking to take in the youngsters from both in and outside the county.

However, KCC is unable to process applications received from outside Kent. Any applicants are being directed back to their local authority.

Jobs fear as potato firm faces closure

THE Kent Potato Company (KPC) is facing closure after its owner confirmed it was planning to shift operations outside the county.

The firm, based at St Nicholas-at-Wade in Thanet, works with local potato producers to pack and spuds and deliver them to major supermarkets. Produce Investments, which owns KPC, said a 45-day consultation period with employees was now under way regarding its potential closure.

Tragedy as teenager killed in car smash

WITNESSES are being sought to an horrific road crash near Whitstable in the early hours of Thursday morning, which left a teenage boy dead.

The 17-year-old was killed around 12.30am on Pean Hill after a red Citroen car crashed. Two others were treated for minor injuries.

Dog dumped in labour

THE RSPCA is appealing for information after a chihuahua was dumped in the middle of labour and later died.

The dog was found inside a cat carrier, which was left by garages in Gregg's Wood Road, Tunbridge Wells, last Friday.

Two dead puppies were found next to her, with another two still waiting to be born.

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Plastic pollution of our fish worries environmentalists

NEARLY three quarters of some fish species around the Kent coast have been found to have plastic in their stomachs.

It comes in the week supermarkets across England introduced a 5p charge for bags in a bid to dramatically slash the damage they cause to the environment.

A team of scientists checked the common flounder, a bottom-feeding flatfish and the common smelt, similar to whitebait.

The Royal Holloway study examined these species in locations from Erith to the Isle of Sheppey.

A worrying 75 per cent contained traces of plastic and the smelt, which swim in the water column, were contaminated in a fifth of cases.

The Royal Holloway's Dr Dave Morrith said: "We also know from



some of the other work we've done on Chinese mitten crabs that they have knots of plastic fibres in their stomachs. So that's crabs and two species of fish. And those plastics seem to be a range of things, and

include nylon, acrylic, polythene and cellophane."

He admits the study was relatively small, but the results show urgent action to reduce these statistics is required.

Train firm liberates seats by shifting first class area

SOUTHEASTERN is shifting its first class carriages on its refurbished rolling stock in a move which will create hundreds of more standard class seats.

The company's Class 375 trains – which account for one third of its rolling stock – are currently undergoing a major multi-million pound upgrade.

Now the same trains are getting their first class compartments, currently situated at the front and rear of each train, moved to a section in one of the middle carriages.

In total, 735 extra standard class seats will be provided by the work – eight per four car train.

Passengers will be able to locate first class seats once they are moved to the middle of the

train as the outside windows will have a distinctive yellow surround, with the words First Class underneath as well as the number one.

The first train is due back in service at the end of October.

Mark Johnson, engineering director at Southeastern, said: "We have already started a major refit of these trains and moving the first class seating at this time allows us to find much needed extra capacity across our fleet. This is important as every seat counts and we are doing all within our power to increase capacity."

The trains are also receiving a new exterior livery of deep blue and light blue doors, replacing the usual white with yellow doors passengers are used to.

10k race to close roads

A NUMBER of roads will be closed today (Sunday) as the popular Givaudan Ashford 10k takes place.

Starting and ending at the town's Julie Rose Stadium, the event is now in its 29th year. The race starts at 10am.

Shops lose their licence

TWO newsagents in Medway have had their licences revoked after they were found selling illegal cigarettes and alcohol.

Kubus, in Chatham High Street, Chatham and Sunny News In Skinner Street, Gillingham, were visited by police and HMRC officials in June.

Jewellers win KoS prize

BROADWAY Jewellers in Bexleyheath have won a wrap-around advertisement on the front of a future edition of Kent on Sunday.

Worth thousands, it was plucked from a lucky draw of all advertisers taking part in a recent promotion organised by our commercial department.

Parkrun reaches Malling

PARKRUN has arrived in Malling after the hugely popular running event started its latest Kent event.

Taking place at 9am each Saturday, the 5km run starts just past the watersports centre at Leybourne Lakes Country Park. It's a free, timed event. See parkrun.org.uk.



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Top Three Stories



1. Police complaints down

But dissatisfaction with process rises 50%

2. Whitstable death smash

A 17-year-old boy died in Pean Hill crash

3. Nod for flood scheme

Flood defences approved in Faversham

The Essential Guide:



Smart motorways in Kent

What they are, and why we're getting more of them in the county.



FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY: Joanna Lumley unveiled a new statue in Folkestone which pays tribute to past and present Gurkha soldiers in the county. For the full story on the new statue's unveiling, and why it's so important to the community turn to page 33



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Top Three Blogs



1. Flawed campaigning

No short term fixes for mental health

2. Times they are a changin'

Life moves slightly too fast after graduation

3. Racism rising?

Is it becoming more acceptable in society?

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STRUGGLING: Education expert Peter Read says that the failings at the former Marlowe Academy illustrate that the academy system doesn't necessarily raise educational standards

'One size fits all' education won't provide choice for our youngsters

There are few in the county's education sector who back David Cameron's plan reports **Jamie Weir...**

EDUCATION specialists have blasted plans to move schooling out of the hands of local authorities, and instead towards a system of academies.

The plans were set out by the prime minister David Cameron who said that he wanted to see every school become an academy under his watch.

Those on the ground aren't so bullish about the proposals, with critics damning them as removing choice from the system.

Mr Cameron made the remarks during his speech to the Conservative Party Conference. In the speech he said he wanted to empower head teachers as 'they off the shackles of local council control'.

He said: "My next ambition is this; 500 new free schools, every school an academy and yes – local authorities running schools a thing of the past."

Academies are schools that, while publicly funded, don't fall under local authority governance.

Instead they get their cash directly from central government and are run by an academy trust, which employs the staff. They can choose to set their own curriculum and also their own term dates.

Academies were first introduced in 2000 as part of a drive to improve pupil performance and break the cycle of low expectations.

But they've received criticism since their creation – particularly after 2010 when a new drive to expand the number of academies was launched by the prime minister.

And this most recent statement from David Cameron has provoked angry responses from critics of the plan, with Ukip councillor Trevor Shonk blasting the plans as taking choice away.

Clr Shonk, who sits on Kent County Council's education committee, is no fan of the new plans.

He told KoS: "It's good for parents and pupils to have choice in education provision. I can't understand why anyone would want to take that away; it just seems an ill thought out idea."

"I've always felt that the best way to ensure resilience in almost all things is to have variety. If we change all of our schools to the academy system, what happens if they start to fail?

"I would say we should definitely keep some schools under the control of KCC, because if academies fail, we still have to provide education.

"We have a duty of care, and if an academy went to the wall, because of finance, or poor governance, we would have to step in to fill the gap left.

"If schools are to be taken out of the equation, then we won't have that capacity."

The Ukip councillor isn't alone in being unhappy at the prospect of seeing education removed wholesale from council control.

In fact in January this year an 18-month inquiry into academies by the House of Commons Education Committee concluded that 'It is too early to judge whether academies

"I'm not in favour of there being a drive in one direction when the evidence doesn't necessarily support it. We seek good relations with all schools...."

Roger Gough, KCC cabinet member for education

raise standards overall'.

It's a sentiment echoed by others who work in education across the county.

Peter Read works as an independent education adviser across the county.

He said that although the system was not perfect, it was unlikely to be improved by changing all schools into academies.

Mr Read said: "My first observation would be that when all of the academies we currently have start performing well it would be easier to think about this. Right now there are a number which are not doing well, so why would we suddenly think all academies are just going to succeed?"

"In my view, there have been a number of local authorities who have under performed across the UK. However in Kent the number of schools achieving good Ofsted results are at very high levels.

Why would we change that?

"One of the earliest academies in the country was the Marlowe Academy. For five years it has performed poorly as a result of weak governance, and that shows that just because an educational institution becomes an academy, it certainly doesn't mean it will become successful.

"If local authorities can show they have the capability to improve schools, then they should just be left to get on with it."

The removal of choice when the system currently in place isn't flawed seems the greatest stumbling block for many.

KCC's education chief, Roger Gough also didn't seem entirely convinced by the plans, though he did say that the council was in favour of devolving appropriate powers to schools wherever possible.

He told KoS: "Prior to 2010 schools in the UK were among the most independent in the world and there has been extensive devolution of powers over finance and other aspects for some time.

"Academies can, and do, help to raise standards but it's far from being the only route to boosting schools.

"In fact, standards, if measured by Ofsted have, over the past year or two grown significantly in primary schools, and 75 per cent of those are maintained.

"I'm not in favour of there being a drive in one direction when the evidence doesn't necessarily support it.

"As far as we're concerned, we seek

good relations with all schools and don't believe that one size fits all."

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) has taken a far harder line, suggesting that the government needs to shore up the education system across the country before it starts looking to alter it.

Paddy Marshall is the regional secretary for the union, which represents teachers, in Kent.

He told KoS that he wanted to see more emphasis put on improving schools, but that changing to an academy only system was unlikely to help.

In fact, Mr Marshall said that the teaching profession was coming under more pressure than ever before which was causing many teachers to consider leaving.

He said: "According to a recent YouGov survey 53 per cent of teachers were considering leaving the profession in the next two years.

"David Cameron's wish to see every school become an academy, illustrates that he places an ideological goal above what is best for children.

"There is absolutely no evidence that becoming an academy improves a school, or provides pupils with a better education.

"Irrespective of the type of school, they need to be appropriately funded, they need qualified teachers and there needs to be sufficient school places.

"The priority for the government should be to address these three issues rather than fixate on one type of school organisation."



CLOSE: 'Tis the season to be extra careful

Paint no use in bid to stop rising death toll of wild deer on roads

As Dartmoor ponies are given a reflective stripe, **Chris Murphy** asks if a similar plan could be rolled out along some of Kent's roads as the number of deer strolling in front of cars is set to rise this month

IN AN effort to prevent a growing number of ponies being struck by cars strolling onto roads in Dartmoor, this week it was revealed they are going to have reflective stripes painted on to them.

The question many in Kent may well be asking is if they can do that for horses, could the same be done for the thousands of deer which roam wild in our countryside and frequently stroll onto our roads.

According to a deer vehicle collision report, between 2003 and 2010, there have been 440 incidents in the county of cars hitting deer.

And between 1999 and 2010, there were 25 personal injury accidents involving the animals on our roads.

The figures may be modest, but it is a growing concern.

Particularly in areas such as the A251 at Challock – on the main road linking Ashford to Faversham.

As motorists head through Kings Wood with its over hanging branches, deer are a regular sight on the side of the road – either transfixed by the oncoming headlights or having already been struck.

In addition, Ashdown Forest – on the East Sussex/Kent border near Tunbridge Wells – is another well known danger spot.

Steve Alton is the conservation officer at Ashdown Forest.

He said: "We have a deer collision almost every day, and rarely are they a clean kill. Because of that I have a team of rangers on call 24 hours a day to cull injured deer.

"There is no real solution to this problem. I would urge drivers to slow down and if they see one deer don't

assume that's it. They move in groups so the chances are more will cross the road."

In the UK between 1999 and 2010, there was a grand total of almost 32,000 collisions.

And all the figures are thought to be under-estimations.

The Deer Initiative does its best to count the casualties around the UK.

Its Kent officer, Jamie Cordery, says establishing accurate numbers just won't happen because generally they are not routinely recorded.

Mr Cordery told KoS: "We know these are the tip of the iceberg as most of them are just not reported.

"It can be a serious problem but it is an expensive problem to solve.

"Painting the deer with reflective stripes just can't be done, as catching them will be almost impossible. And then there is the animal welfare aspect. I am not sure people will be happy with deer being painted like this."

While there are solutions, Mr Cordery said they would be astronomicaly expensive.

He told us: "Things get worse when there is a high volume of both traffic and deer in an area. It is then compounded when a piece of woodland they use is divided by a road.

"They will naturally want to repeatedly cross the road to use both areas, and that can cause problems."

The number of annual collisions peak between October and December.

Mr Cordery said: "In some areas on the continent and Scandinavia, fences are put up along long stretches of woodland because there is a high risk of deer crossing.

"This is quite effective, but the

fence has to end somewhere. If crossing gaps are left, there is a high chance the deer crossing could miss seeing the exit and then be trapped on the carriageway which is far worse.

"There are better solutions like tunnels and overpasses for deer. But unless they were incorporated at the time a road was built, the costs are going to put them well out of reach of any government, especially in these days of financial cutbacks."

Adds Steve Alton at Ashdown Forest: "We have a 40mph limit on most of our roads, but it is rare to see a car doing that speed. It really does make sense as deer are generally quite large and can easily cause injury to those in the cars too, so it is in the driver's best interest to keep to the speed limit.

"I would like to see fences put up along the faster roads, but that could lead to creating a corridor effect deer can become trapped in.

"I wish there was a simple cost-effective solution, but there isn't. Drivers need to take more responsibility and keep their wits about them."

The Country, Land and Business Association represents landowners, farmers and rural businesses.

Its south east regional director, Robin Edwards, told KoS this week it was urging motorists to take the foot of the gas over the coming weeks.

He said: "At this time of year, there are often deer on the move, particularly at dawn and dusk, and with shorter daylight hours and often poor visibility on the roads, drivers need to be particularly vigilant.

"Accidents involving deer tend to be more frequent in the autumn, during the rutting or breeding season,



SLOW: Another near miss as a deer crosses in front of a car

when deer are moving in larger numbers during peak traffic times.

"Between 40,000 and 75,000 deer are killed on the roads every year, according to the AA, and the size of the animals means these accidents can result in serious injuries to car users, as well as creating extensive damage to vehicles.

"If you are involved in an accident with a deer, report the incident to the police, even if there is no damage to your vehicle or passengers, as they can arrange for a deer warden to attend."

Organisations like Deer Collisions say they now want a better system of reporting so more proactive advice

can be distributed in high risk areas.

It wants to build a national database which can then be used to assess factors associated with deer collisions, and aspects of deer behaviour and management relevant to enhancing measures aimed at preventing such accidents.

It said: "We want to investigate such aspects of deer behaviour and deer management which may affect accident risks and the effectiveness of differing mitigation measures.

"On that basis we can make recommendations regarding potential improvements in the design, installation and maintenance of measures aimed at reducing accidents."



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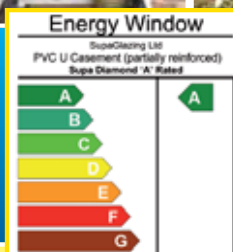
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Dramatic shift in housing may help first-time buyers in Kent

As the prime minister launches his new plan to help those struggling to get onto the hard to access property ladder, KoS speaks to the leading lights in construction in the county to find out whether they think it will work...

by **Jamie Weir**

Jamie.Weir@archant.co.uk

HOUSEBUILDERS across the county have welcomed the prime minister's announcement that planning rules would be slimmed down to help more young people get a foot on the property ladder, but have warned more needs to be done to tackle the crisis in supply.

David Cameron made the announcement at the Conservative Party Conference on Wednesday, telling the audience that there would be a 'dramatic shift in housing policy'.

The prime minister said: "For years, politicians have been talking about building what they call 'affordable homes' – but the phrase was deceptive. It basically meant homes that were only available to rent. What people want are homes they can actually own."

"I can announce a dramatic shift in housing policy in our country. Those old rules which said to developers: you can build on this site, but only if you build affordable homes for rent, we're replacing them with new rules. You can build here, and those affordable homes can be available to buy. Yes, from generation rent to generation buy."

The proposals – which currently lack detail – would help what the prime minister calls 'generation rent' get a foot on the housing ladder which has, in recent years grown more and more difficult as prices have soared.

Many young adults have been priced out of a housing market which has seen their parents profit for the past few decades as house prices have soared.

Over the course of the last year, the problem has been at its most acute in the south east, with prices rising by seven per cent, further pushing houses out of many peoples reach.

The cost of the average home in Kent has more than doubled, surging upwards from £120,408 in 2001 to £265,092 this year.

Salaries have been unable to keep pace with that rise, and now, mortgages have grown to multiples of the average person's salary.

For those unable to clamber on to the housing ladder before the rise, it has now become extremely difficult for people to save the required sum to own their own home.

In fact, the number of people who own their own home has dropped significantly as prices have risen, with a fall of five per cent between 2001 and 2011. It has kept dropping, with the

average salary needed to buy a home over £40,000 now, while the average salary of a person in Kent is just £28,158.

It has led to the moniker 'generation rent' being given to those who have been locked out of the property market, and are, instead forced to use the rental market which is, in itself becoming more expensive.

The new government announcement aims to tackle just that problem.

Mark Quinn is the managing director of Quinn Estates, which has development sites around the county. He said that the prime minister's announcement would make it easier to get houses built for those struggling the most – the first-time buyers.

Mr Quinn told KoS: "It's a very common-sense approach and I think it'll lead to an increase in delivery."

"Government clearly wants houses for first-time buyers built, and this will make it a lot easier for developers to do just that. Bureaucracy in the current system will be slimmed down as a result of this, so from my perspective as a developer, it's a welcome new announcement."

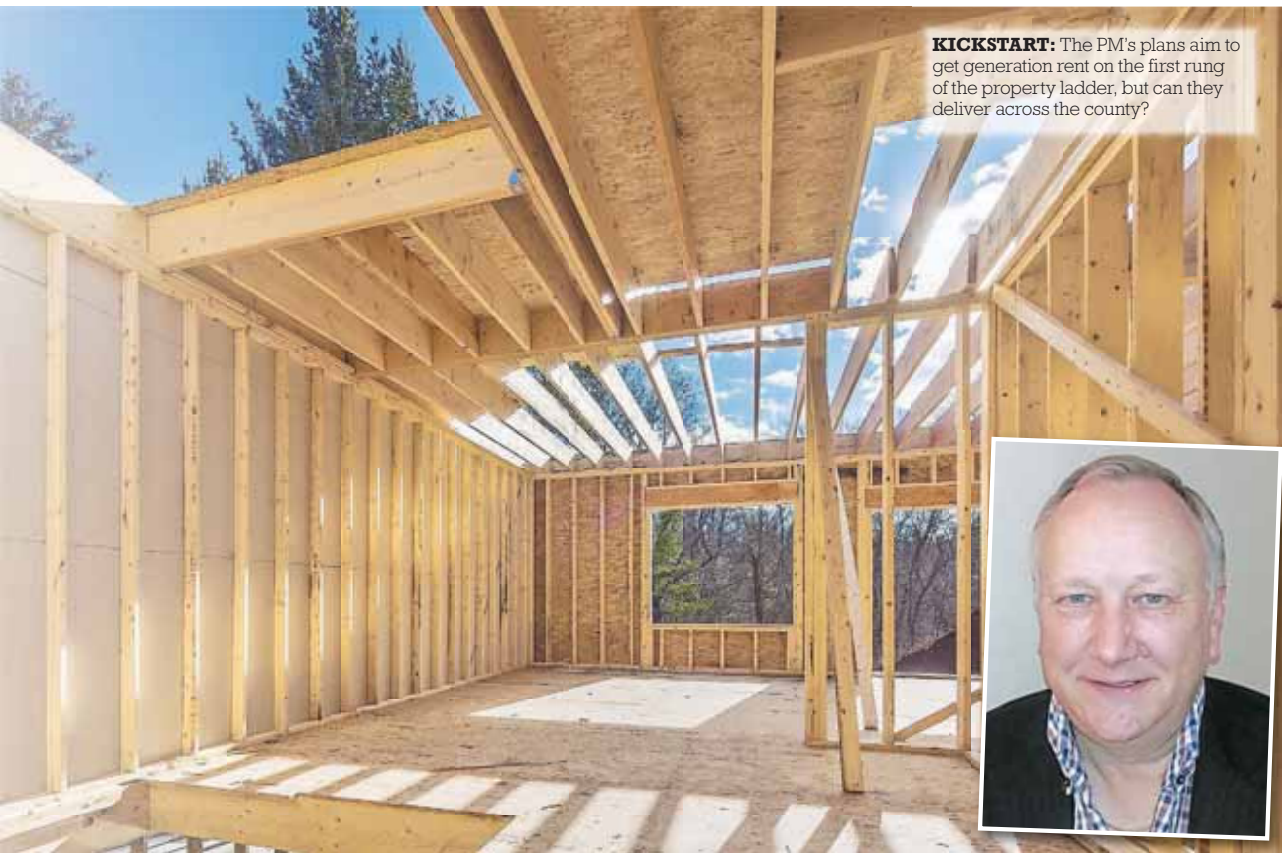
"Burdening schemes with more and more demand for traditional affordable rent housing has prevented us from building in the past. This approach, which essentially allows us see a market price, take 20 per cent off, and just build the houses will remove a lot of the complexities from the system."

The announcement was also welcomed by Nick Fenton who chairs the Kent Developers' Group – an industry body which lobbies for the housebuilding and development sector. But he told KoS that it was now important for the announcement to work for all housebuilders.

He said: "The problem is we now need to know what the detail is, rather than just seeing the big headline announcement. How's it actually going to work in practise, that's the question which we need answered."

"The housing sector is built on a range of developers, with big ones, smaller builders, social providers – it's important that all of those different developers are being encouraged by government, rather than policies which may only benefit a few."

One part of the announcement from the Conservatives which was particularly welcomed was a further simplification of rules governing building on brownfield – or previously developed – land. Kent County Council's deputy cabinet member for growth, economic



KICKSTART: The PM's plans aim to get generation rent on the first rung of the property ladder, but can they deliver across the county?



MIXED: Sean Holden (above) says he wants to keep Kent beautiful, while Nick Fenton (left) says there must be a balance to building

development and communities, Sean Holden, said that he wanted to see more building, but it had to be in the right places.

Cllr Holden told KoS: These announcements from the prime minister are going to make a big difference. There seems to be a real drive to-

wards encouraging brownfield land development which I am particularly in favour of. Kent is a beautiful place, and I want it to stay that way.

"However we also need to realise we need housing and with population projections we

know that we'll need even more in the future. These announcements aren't the solution, but they are the beginning of one."

That view, says David Hicken who is managing director of DHA Planning in Maidstone, is one which will only work if local government

responds to the prime minister's announcement.

Mr Hicken told KoS: "I think the biggest factor in all of this is that whatever government says, it has got to filter down to local councils who will implement all of it, because without that it will not happen."

"Most councils tend to take a very independent line, and we see a number of significant hurdles at every stage of the planning system."

Those hurdles, says Mr Quinn, have always presented the biggest problem when trying to increase supply of housing across Kent.

"What actually drives prices down is competition," explains Mr Quinn.

He continued: "A relaxation in planning will lead to less house price inflation, better deals for first time buyers and more economic development. That leads to the socio-economic growth which everyone in the county wants."



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Meeting set by rail bosses to explain new crossing plans

by Jamie Weir

Jamie.Weir@archant.co.uk

NETWORK Rail has responded to calls for the Glebe Way level crossing in Whitstable to be redeveloped, inviting nearby residents to a public meeting to find out what its planning for the crossing.

The meeting on October 26 will give people a chance to see how Network Rail intends to redevelop the crossing, which has seen four tragedies in five years.

The controversial crossing most recent claimed the life of schoolgirl Sacha Wheeler.

The 14-year-old was killed in February, with a coroner finding that the teen probably didn't hear the train at the high risk crossing.

He went on to ask why a Network Rail report into the crossing, which recommended safety measures be put in place in August 2014, had not been put in place.

But now Network Rail, which owns

and maintains railway tracks, says it is working on new proposals and has met with the local council as it starts to find a solution to the crossing.

It now wants to explain those proposals to the local community at the meeting at Whitstable Town Football Club, which will take place between 2pm and 8pm.

A Network Rail spokesman told KoS: "We would like to express our sympathy to the family and friends of Sacha Wheeler.

"Any death on the railway is a tragedy and the impact is felt not only by those who knew the person but also by the train driver and staff who are involved in the aftermath. We want to do everything we can to stop this from happening.

"We remain committed to working with the community to find a solution to closing Glebe Way level crossing. The constraints of the site mean that this will not be a simple exercise and we are currently exploring a number of options to replace the crossing.

"We have now met with Canterbury City Council and discussed those options. We are now planning to hold a public information event to listen the views of the local community before a decision on how to proceed will be taken."

Canterbury councillor Stephen Bartley, who is chairman of the Whitstable Area Member Panel, said the council would work with Network Rail to provide the best solution.

He told KoS: "Keeping people safe on railway crossings is crucial, so we welcome the consultation being launched by Network Rail into the crossing at Glebe Way.

"It is now really important to hear the views of local people on the possible options for the crossing.

"We will work with Network Rail and Kent County Council for the best solution once the consultation is finalised."

The rail operator said that during its work on a long-term solution at the crossing it would make simpler changes to improve safety sooner.



TRAGEDY: Network Rail expressed its sympathy to Sacha Wheeler's family

The spokesman said: "In the meantime we are installing an additional audible warning system to help reduce risk at this crossing further. This is a new piece of technology and the Glebe Way level crossing will be one of the first in country to benefit.

"The safety of passengers and the wider public is our highest priority, which is why we regularly review the safety measures we have in place at each of our level crossings and will

always consider options for how they can be improved."

The news comes as British Transport Police started a week of action on Monday to improve level crossing safety by motorists and pedestrians called Operation Look.

The BTP, which polices the rail network, says that in the last year it had recorded 3,500 incidents of risky behaviour at crossings which highlighted the need for action.

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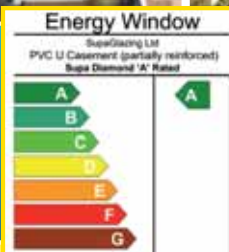
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More must be done to help keep environment bag free say group

Green groups say that the new 5 pence charge introduced in England on Monday will not be enough to rid the blight of single use plastic bags but retailers aren't all happy with the law reports **Jamie Weir**

CAMPAIGNERS are demanding more action is taken to tackle the waste of disposable carrier bags, despite government introducing a new mandatory charge on the bags this week.

The government's new five pence charge for plastic bags has been introduced to cut down on shoppers' wasteful use of carrier bags, which are usually only used for 20 minutes before being discarded.

The decision to force the charge on shops, which have more than 250 full-time employees, was a victory for environmental groups, concerned with the way many wasted carrier bags.

One of the groups which campaigned to get government to introduce the charge was the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

Its branch in Kent said that while it was heartening to see more interest being taken in the issue, more needed to be done to help protect the environment.

CPRE Kent chairman Christine Drury told KoS: "CPRE has been leading the coalition of groups campaigning to Break the Bag Habit. With bags choking our rural, marine and urban areas, and causing considerable damage to wildlife it is great that the government is finally dealing with the gross overuse of bags.

"The next step will be to extend the charge to all materials and all retailers across the UK, so that the scheme can be as effective as possible and less confusing to consumers and retailers."

The point of the scheme, says Mrs Drury is to make people think twice, rather than simply taking a bag they don't need.

She said: "By reducing the number of bags given out, the amount of unnecessary waste we create is reduced. And with fewer bags in circulation, there is far less chance of them ending up as litter and spoiling and damaging our environment. We hope people in Kent will welcome this introduction of the bag charge as a necessary step to rid our parks, streets, countryside and waterways of the litter pollution of carrier bags."

It's an idea which has a fairly hefty weight of evidence behind it – Wales and Scotland introduced mandatory charging a few years ago. Wales introduced it in 2011, leading to a 79 per cent decrease in single use carrier bag's usage inside three years.

Introducing the change, environment minister Rory Stewart said: "Simple changes to our

shopping routines, such as taking our own bags with us or using more bags for life, can make a huge difference in reducing the amount of plastic in circulation meaning we can all enjoy a cleaner, healthier country."

The massive waste from plastic bags – which are extremely difficult to recycle – is set for a big reduction according to the government.

In 2014, a staggering 7.64 billion bags were given out by supermarkets. Government says that under the plan, that figure will drop by as much as 80 per cent in major supermarkets, while it's likely to fall by around 50 per cent on the high street.

Green councillor for Shepway Martin Whybrow said that the new initiative was good but not good enough in his view.

That's because the new 'bag tax' as some have called it, won't actually apply to all plastic bags. Small retailers – those with fewer than 250 staff – won't be compelled to make the 5p charge, although they can choose to do so. There are also other caveats to the legislation, which mean that shoppers who are buying certain items – such as unwrapped food, raw meat or fish or flowers – aren't required to pay.

Shops also won't have to charge if they use paper bags or the shopper is in transit on a plane or train for instance.

Cllr Whybrow told KoS: "It is a step in the right direction, given the average 140 plastic bags per person taken home last year, and such a measure is proven to markedly change consumer behaviour. However, it is a shame that it is a 'watered down' version of what has been introduced elsewhere. I'd like to see it applied to all shops, regardless of size. After all, these bags are an ecological disaster in our seas and a blight on our countryside and towns. We need to ensure that the alternatives are as environmentally friendly as possible. Our



CPRE: Kent chairman Christine Drury



GREEN: Shepway's Martin Whybrow

local community group, Transition Hythe, has reusable bags made from recycled clothes, curtains and other materials – you can't get much more environmentally friendly than that."

Retailers say that the new charge should be applied universally, rather than the piecemeal approach which they believe government has taken.

The environment policy adviser for industry group the British Retail Consortium, Alice Ellison, said that while retailers were happy to help, there needed to be a recognition that progress was being made. Ms Ellison said that the change would be unlikely to lead to the same sort of reduction in bag usage seen elsewhere.

She said: "The carrier bag charge for England is

unnecessarily complicated and not consistent with the simple approach taken elsewhere in the UK. Consequently, the charge will not deliver the same environmental impact as in the rest of the UK.

"The charge leaves retailers with complex messages to communicate to shoppers, such as why some stores and bags are exempt from the charge and why these exemptions do not exist elsewhere.

"Bag usage may not have fallen, but that doesn't mean that supermarkets' progress has stalled on addressing this and wider issues. Supermarkets' environmental work extends well beyond carrier bags to more important green goals. An obsession with carrier bags must not get in the way of these bigger goals."

MOUNTAIN: Plastic bags are a blight on the environment according to campaigners who want more action to tackle the issue.



Will storm of fury finally calm over future of harbour village?

Chris Murphy reports on the row in Whitstable at the coastal town's picturesque quay over council plans for the popular selection of hut-based businesses...

A HUGELY popular shopping village, nestled within Whitstable's busy working harbour, is to return next year after an angry war of words erupted earlier this month amid fears it would shut for good.

The harbour village has sprung up over recent years close to the quayside and pulled in thousands of visitors – both tourists and locals.

Boasting some 33 small huts – similar in size to beach huts – since 2007, they have sold everything from freshly baked breads, ice cream, fresh local fruit and artworks.

In addition to the existing seafood markets and restaurants by the quayside, it helped make the area one of the town's most popular destinations.

But a shadow was cast over its very future when the lease holder of the site locked horns with Canterbury City Council – the local authority which runs the Whitstable Harbour Board, which owns the land.

Stuart Heaver, who runs Kentish Trader Ltd, has held the lease for eight years.

But earlier this month he announced it was closing for good and fired a broadside at the council, accusing it of a 'lack of integrity'.

It was always going to have to close this year and the huts moved, to allow for vital scheduled repairs to be carried out on the sea wall. Mr Heaver claimed he and his stallholders were being forced out.

The council, however, insists it has now spoken directly to the stallholders and reached an amicable agreement – after a series of meetings (the most recent of which was last Friday) – which will see the lease go up for tender over the winter, with the stalls opening again in the summer of 2016.

With the success of the site, it is expected costs will rise, both for the leaseholder and the traders on the site to reflect its increasing popularity.

Mr Heaver will have the opportunity to bid again but is likely to face competition.

He told KoS this week: "I think you can safely say I will never ever attempt to do business with Canterbury council ever again. I can

say that with some certainty.

"This was a great asset to the town that created 20 new businesses that moved out from here into the town itself.

"And now it has gone. Now the council is going to have to spend lots of money, have people jump through lots of hoops to re-create something that was already there. What is the sense of that? I just don't get it. It is lunacy.

"The village was once described by the harbour board as a 'key asset' but in my considered opinion, this asset has been deliberately sabotaged."

Mr Heaver said that the move "exploited the essential harbour works, with which we have always fully co-operated, as an opportunity to remove my company's control of the business we started from nothing. As a result, I and many other people are not only deprived of our livelihoods but we also have grave concerns about the possibility of malpractice."

He said he was taking legal advice and will be consulting with the local government ombudsman.

Mr Heaver added: "Even now I find

it impossible to consider the prospect that this diabolical and unethical behaviour that has caused so much damage and pain to so many people in this town was endorsed by board members.

"You don't need to be an expert lawyer or business person to recognise that this whole shameful episode stinks and that those responsible should be held to account."

But the chairman of the harbour board, Conservative city councillor Pat Todd, slammed the allegations and vehemently denied the council or harbour board had stepped out of line and blamed Mr Weaver for spreading 'misinformation' about the village.

He said: "Now that the board has taken the decision that the market will return next year, I would like to take this opportunity to make some comments about what has happened over the last few weeks.

"To put it mildly, it has been very disappointing and frustrating to see the misinformation that has been spread around Whitstable by the former leaseholder of the harbour village.

"It has caused considerable upset

and confusion for the traders at the village, and they have understandably come to us for guidance and reassurance. I am happy to say that we have been able to provide this and that we continue to have a very positive relationship with the traders. I look forward to seeing them return in



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CHANGE: Whitstable's popular harbour has become one of the town's most popular destinations, helped in no small part by the harbour village

the spring and to the market flourishing.

"To be absolutely clear, the council bent over backwards to try and work with Mr Heaver as his lease neared an end. We sought meetings with him

but calls and emails went unanswered for long periods. When we did meet him and agree a way forward, he would move the goalposts.

"It culminated in an unacceptable situation earlier this month when he

announced he was closing the village for good, while we were in the middle of a meeting with the traders themselves discussing the future. In my view, this is not the way to conduct business.

"There has been lots of talk in the town and on social media about this whole matter. Most of it has been wide of the mark and I want to make one thing clear to the people of Whitstable: Your harbour board has dealt

with this with complete propriety. We have followed the correct processes throughout and we reject any accusations to the contrary.

"Be in no doubt – we believe the harbour market has a fantastic future on the south quay."

Rent for the six traders that owned their hut cost £250 a month at South Quay and included all bills. The maximum monthly cost was £333 a month, including all bills, unless they used a lot of electricity and then they have a small meter installed.

The village was open between May and December but some traders, Mr Heaver said, paid him a pepper corn rent of £50 to £100 a month for the off-season months if they wanted to have a go at trading.

Mr Heaver told us: "I paid the council £2,300 a month, plus I also had to pay the electricity and water bills, as well as having them installed originally.

"Plus I paid the rates and public liability insurance, security and management."

A council spokesman told us: "Like every other council, we have a duty to our residents to make the most of every asset we have. Mr Heaver is perfectly at liberty to submit another tender."

■ **What do you think of the harbour village? Did you trade there? Why not share your views and experiences and join the debate. You can write to us - send your correspondence to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk We'll publish some of the best comments on the letters' page of an upcoming issue of KoS.**

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Relief as 10ft carpet python is found alive

By Chris Murphy

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A TEN-foot python, missing from its home earlier this summer, has finally been recovered after being spotted in a tree at a supermarket car wash.

The coastal carpet python, named Zombie because of her habit of breathing heavily, vanished several months ago, sparking an appeal for information to track her down.

She was spotted, briefly, when someone took a photograph of her on a green verge outside a nearby medical centre, close to her home in Larkfield.

But then she appeared to vanish into thin air, leaving her owner distraught - and determined to find her.

Owner Chris Cini was terrified his pride and joy would never be found and eventually die from the cold as winter approaches.

Dozens of locals in Larkfield, near Maidstone, turned out to search for the wayward python after it went missing, to no avail.

Her skin tones helped her blend in well with undergrowth making a random spot almost impossible.

But someone washing their car at the Tesco car wash in the town looked up when bird droppings fell on his freshly polished bodywork.

It was easy to see why the bird reacted that way - Zombie the 10ft snake was on a branch nearby.

As it turned out, finding Zombie was the easy bit - trying to climb the tree to bring her safely down to earth proved more of a challenge.

With Mr Cini alerted to the sighting, he arrived on the scene and borrowed a ladder to clamber 30 feet into the air to gently unwind his reptilian pet from the branches.

A delighted and relieved Mr Cini, 43, told KoS: "You can't really blame that bird for reacting that way seeing a snake nearby."

"Zombie was pretty high in the tree and it took a lot of effort to get her down, but she is safely at home now and will be kept under lock and key."

"I don't want her escaping again. I was really worried for her welfare



REUNITED: Chris Cini is reunited with pet Zombie after the snake was found hiding in a tree close to a supermarket car wash. It had been missing since escaping from his home in Larkfield back in June.

when she vanished. It was summer then and I knew we had some time to find her.

"It is getting colder now, so I was getting more and more worried."

"She as a little dehydrated but had been eating. I don't know what she has been eating, but would guess it could be mice or rats, small birds or even squirrel."

He added: "I am so grateful to all the people who had turned out to find her, and particularly the people at the car

wash who suspected the snake may have been mine and got in touch."

"Now I will be taking special care of her to make sure she is not able to escape again."

Zombie used to have the run of the back garden at his home. She escaped through a conservatory door back in June. Now extra precautions are being taken to ensure there are no further scares.

There had been concerns she had died after the remains of a python were



found in Larkfield recently. Remarkably, however, they were from another snake. It is not known if that snake had died in the wild or been dumped there by its owner after dying in captivity.



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Rainbow colours at charity run

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

MORE than 2,500 runners created a colourful scene amid the historic surroundings of Hever Castle last weekend as the Run or Dye event came to town.

The event sees competitors run, walk or dance a 5km route - having been showered in all colours of the rainbow first.

It creates a vibrant spectacle and one which helped raised thousands of pounds for charity.

Inspired by the ancient Hindu festival of Holi, also known as the 'festival of colours', Run or Dye gives competitors the opportunity to experience the thrill of the festival.

Monies raised were split between the event's national charity partner, Help for Heroes and local St Lawrence CofE Primary School. Its pupils joined others from neighbouring schools in covering the runners through the course.

Alison Saunders, headteacher at St Lawrence CofE Primary School, in Sevenoaks, was one of those taking part. She said: "It was thrilling to be part of such a fun, colourful event. Fundraising is key to improving the future of the children at the school."

The dye used was a safe, eco-friendly, plant-based cornstarch dye, sprayed at every kilometre.



FINALE: Runners celebrate in style at the end of the race



COVERED: Runners were pelted at every kilometre on the course



BLAST: Entertainers fire dye at the crowd at the end of the event



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Mixed reaction to changes to business rates

In future, all monies raised by a council will stay with it instead of half going centrally for allocation by government but is this a cause for optimism or a bid to erode local budgets?

Jamie Weir

Jamie.Weir@archant.co.uk

BUSINESS rates will stay in the local area under proposals announced by George Osborne earlier this week.

The plan has met with mixed opinions from councillors across the county, with some cautiously optimistic, and others making it clear that it could be a cynical ploy to further erode local budgets set by central government.

The announcement by the chancellor would mean that all business rates raised in the local area would remain with the council.

It will mark a sea-change in how much cash councils get, as currently they only keep up to 50 per cent of the rates with the remaining cash going into Westminster's coffers – cash they could ill afford to lose after austerity cuts imposed on them.

Medway's Labour group leader, Vince Maple said that although there was potential for it to be a decent plan, it could lead to less cash for councils.

He told KoS: "This announcement, as is so often the case with George Osborne, was just an attempt to grab headlines.

"It's interesting, but without flesh on the bones, it's difficult to know quite what the effect will be in Medway. The government often seems to pass the buck,

without actually passing the bucks."

Under the current system, councils across the country collect the cash raised from the business rates before handing it to the treasury.

Once there, the treasury divides up the collected pot before redistributing cash to council's which have fewer businesses in their area. Cllr Maple said that under the new system, there would likely be 'winners and losers'.

He said: "The reality is that right now there is almost no detail coming out of government about how it will work in practise.

"What we can say with certainty is that there will be winners and losers. Currently Medway is a top up authority, which means we get given a bit more cash from the treasury. Whether we'd lose out or not remains to be seen right now, as currently we don't actually know how it will all be implemented."

It's a similar story from other councils across Kent, with Canterbury City Council's leader, Simon Cook saying that he's looking forward to finding out more.

Cllr Cook told KoS: "We welcome any devolution of power, so this announcement presents us with an opportunity that we should seize. There will be much more information to come in due course and we look forward to seeing the full details."

That's a sentiment echoed by Swale Borough Council's (SBC) finance chief, Duncan Dewar-Whalley.



LOCATE IN KENT: Paul Wooky



CHANGES: George Osborne

Cllr Dewar-Whalley, cabinet member for finance at SBC, said: "This is a welcome announcement from the government, though – as ever – the devil will be in the detail. We were already planning our budget for the elimination of the Revenue Support Grant and we will have to see what the exact rules are around the operation of business rates."

"Certainly, the partial localisation of business rates two years ago has been beneficial to us, as we put a high priority on promoting economic regeneration across the borough."

The leader of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Nicolas Heslop, was also waiting for greater detail on the chancellor's announcement.

He said: "I welcome the acknowledgement from central government that local authorities are best placed to manage appropriate business growth in our communities. At this stage, we only have the headline message and it would be premature to speculate on the potential impact to the council's financial position without having clarity on the details."

The detail could be some time coming, with the chancellor stating it would only be in place by 2020. However, he did rebuff critics who said top ups would fall, stating that tariffs which would support places that may lose out otherwise would be maintained. He didn't give any specific details on the issue though.

The news has been welcomed by the Local Government Association – the national group which works on behalf of all local councils.

Its chairman Gary Porter said the announcement was great news.

He said: "Today's announcement by the chancellor is great news for councils and shows that the government has listened to the arguments set out by local government. The LGA has long-argued that the current system of business rates needed reform so councils could effectively support small businesses and boost high streets."

One aspect of the announcement that Cllr Porter was particularly happy about was the fact local councils will now be able to determine what their own business rates should be. That means councils will be able to lower rates to attract business, or put them up to grow revenues.

Cllr Porter said: "Councils have been hugely restricted in their ability to introduce local discounts with government setting the charge and keeping half of business rates income. With greater local control, councils will have flexibility to reduce business rates for the types of shops and businesses that residents want in their high streets and neighbourhoods."

"Councils and businesses both agree that business rates should be a local tax set by local areas. It is right that all of the money which a business pays is retained by local government and this will be a vital boost to investment in infrastructure and public services."

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) is one authority which thinks the changes will benefit it.

The council's portfolio holder for finance and governance, Paul Barrington-King said: "This announcement is very welcome and one which we have been calling for over many years. At every opportunity we have been explaining that business rates are a national tax with the rateable value set by the Valuation Office and the charge in the pound set by central government."

"TWBC collects £52 million from local businesses but only receives back £2 million. The public who support local businesses have found it quite hard to believe that only 4p in the pound is retained locally by the council to support local services."

"The council's finance director, Lee Colyer, has been leading the call for local communities to have a greater say in how business rates are set and for a greater share to be retained locally. The leader of the council, David Jukes, has also taken up this issue directly with ministers and our local MP."

"The new government has listened and we eagerly await the details and timeframe. This change will put the council in a stronger position to work with businesses, to help support independent traders, nurture new businesses and help to deliver growth so everyone can benefit from a thriving borough."

The news appeals to business too, with Darren Rigden, a partner at Crowe Clark Whitehill – a national audit, tax and advisory service with offices in Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone – saying that it created a good environment for business to flourish.

He did however warn that there could be downsides for some councils.

Mr Rigden told KoS: "This could be good news for business as councils will be able to vary rates to help areas improve and attract more businesses. Personally, I think it makes sense for councils, which should understand local needs better than central government, to be in control of these rates and to use this as a mechanism to attract businesses and help them grow."

"If councils take a medium to slightly longer term view, we could see a reduction in rates as councils try to attract more companies, generating more revenue overall."

"Equally, the promise of more rates from more premises could conceivably encourage councils to allow more business premises to be developed."

"However, a potential downside could be that rate rises are used to plug gaps in council budgets and that areas with fewer premises will face increased rates."

That potential for some areas to suffer is something the LGA is also concerned by.

Cllr Porter said: "We would expect measures to ensure local areas with less ability to generate business rates income do not suffer as a result of these changes and all councils are also given leeway to vary business rates up as well as down."

"Councils currently have to fund half of all business rates refunds but, by 2020, they will be liable for 100 per cent under this new system. This makes reform of the appeals system even more urgent to protect councils from the growing and costly risk and appeals and ensure businesses are happy with what they pay."

Paul Wookey heads up the inward investment agency, Locate in Kent, which looks to boost business growth across the county by bringing in new organisations. He said that he was hopeful some of the cash which councils received from the changes would go to growing local economies.

He told KoS: "At the moment, it sounds good in principal, but at the same time, government are going to remove some of the grant funding given to local authorities, so it's really about what the net benefit will be."

"It all depends how the local authorities reinvest the money they retain. I'd hope they would support regeneration and investment into high streets, and the general business environment, but of course local authorities will be under more pressure on how they spend this money."

He feels it could draw more people to the county, due to its business offering.

Mr Wookey said: "It will make more and more authorities more competitive to try and attract business, as obviously they'll get to keep the business rates. Kent's got a good offer, so I'd have thought it can do well but of course we'll have to wait to see. Ultimately we'll be in a much more competitive environment in Kent."



NOT SO SURE: Cllr Vince Maple, leader of Medway's Labour group (left) while Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Paul Barrington-King has welcomed George Osborne's announcement on changes to business rates

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How county plays major role in the legend of 007

As fans of James Bond get ready to see Daniel Craig return to the big screen in Spectre, Chris Murphy takes a look at the county's deep links with both Ian Fleming and the secret agent himself

JAMES Bond bursts back on to the big screen at the end of this month as Spectre becomes the 24th outing for the secret agent with the licence to kill.

And, once again, for the people of Kent it is the chance to see the latest exploits of a hero who grew up in quiet village near Canterbury. Or at least, so the books on which the films are based, say.

Because the fictional hero has his roots deep within the county's fertile soil. Not only did author Ian Fleming write a number of his most celebrated 007 books here, but he frequently used the county as his inspiration for the character.

Thus, the books depict Bond being brought up in Pett Bottom, near Canterbury, by his Aunt Charmian, when his parents are killed in a climbing accident when he was 11.

He had formerly lived in a sprawling country house in Scotland. Named Skyfall, it was also the name of the critically acclaimed last big screen outing for the secret service hero.

The Pett Bottom link runs deep. Mr Fleming wrote the penultimate Bond book, You Only Live Twice, in the



beer garden of the village's only pub, The Duck Inn.

For a number of years in the 1950s, the author lived in White Cliff Cottage, a home at the very foot of the White Cliffs of Dover and with the shingle beach on its doorstep.

A popular draw for tourists on St Margaret's Bay, he bought the property from its former owner, his friend the famous playwright Noel Coward.

There he penned Moonraker. In it, Bond and female companion, Gala Brand, survive a chalk landslide engineered by the evil Sir Hugo Drax on the clifftop right next to

CHANGING FACE OF OUR FAVOURITE SECRET AGENT

THERE has been plenty of speculation that Daniel Craig will be bowing out after Spectre, the latest James Bond film, hits the screens.

But in an interview recently he seemed to pour cold water on the rumours that he was ready to bow out, as the rumour mill started as to who could replace him (Homeland star Damian Lewis apparently leading the

charge at the bookmakers).

"I work myself to death," the actor told the Mail on Sunday. "It's getting harder. But such is life. I'll keep going as long as I'm physically able."

Mr Craig, 47, had hinted he may call time on his stint as 007 after Skyfall, but with a contract for one more film, after Spectre, it seems we may not yet have seen the back of an

actor who shrugged off initial doubts about his suitability to become one of the best loved of all the actors who have portrayed Bond.

He has completed four films as the secret agent since taking over the role nine years ago.

And he had a lot to live up to.

Few will argue that Scotland's finest, Sean Connery, remains the most

BACK: Spectre sees Daniel Craig reprise his role as the secret agent later this month, but did you know that author Ian Fleming wrote that 007 grew up in our county?



Fleming's house. The pair recover with a warm bath and Welsh rarebit at The Granville Hotel, in St Margaret's which is now flats.

Above his cottage on the coast is a glass-fronted house called Moonraker – named after the famous links.

Along the coast in Dover, in the Moonraker book, Bond refers to Dover's "wonderful cardboard castle". His night drive takes him past Swin-gate radar station, just north of the town, where he notes "the ruby spangled masts rising like petrified Roman candles on his right".

And in Deal when escaping from Drax, Bond and Gala Brand skirt round the Royal Marine Garrison's firing range.

In Sandwich, Bond and Auric Goldfinger play a round of golf at Open venue Royal St George's where Fleming was a member. In the book, the course is called Royal St Mark's, and the resident golf profession-

al Alfred Blacking; in real life, it was Alfred Whiting.

It was the golf which cast such a strong spell. Before buying his home, Fleming used to stay at the Guilford Hotel at Sandwich Bay, which has now gone. There he played bridge with friends who formed a group called Le Cercle. He was noted for driving down to Kent from London in his Ford Thunderbird to Royal St George's on a Friday and then play nine or 18 holes before tea.

Another of Fleming's favourite haunts was Higham Park near Bridge – the home of inventive motor racing fan Count Louis Zborowski, who built the real life trio of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang racers.

The author also loved to visit Dover's Cafe Royal, previously the Royal Cafe. A possible Casino Royale connection has been rumoured for decades.

Still in Goldfinger, Manston is used. Then it was an RAF base before becoming an

international airport and could now emerge as a business park and housing.

Ramsgate is used by Goldfinger for smuggling. "Quiet little port," says Bond. "Customs and police who were probably only on the look-out for brandy from France."

Goldfinger's house The Gran ge was at Reculver along with his gold smelting works.

In the many movies, Kent featured a few times. The Kent Film Office said Mereworth Castle is used as Sir James' home in the original Casino Royale which starred David Niven as 007.

Diamonds are Forever sees an appearance of Dover docks, and Chatham's dockyard is in The World is Not Enough. And then it is back to Manston airport for a scene in Die Another Day.

Mr Fleming adored the county but he also loved the finer things in life and was known as a heavy drinker and smoker.

In 1961, he survived a heart attack. But just three years later, while booked into a Canterbury hotel, he went once more to the Royal St George's Golf Club for lunch. He was captain of the club for 1964/5 and was attending a committee meeting there the night before he died. On his return to the hotel and a dinner with friends, he suffered another attack. He would not recover.

The heart attack struck on August 11, 1964. His last words were reported to be to the ambulance crew, telling them: "I am sorry to trouble you chaps. I don't know how you get along so fast with the traffic on the roads these days."

He died, aged 56, the following day, his son Caspar's 12th birthday. In tribute, Royal St George's flew its club flag at half mast. He was buried near Swindon.

His son died of a drugs overdose aged 23 and is buried alongside his father.

FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BOND AND HIS CREATOR



LEGEND has it that the 007 code name has its origins in a rather more mundane site than Her Majesty's Secret Service.

It is, and remains, the number of the bus service which runs from London Victoria to Deal – a coach which would have taken the same route that Ian Fleming himself would have taken as he headed down from the capital to spend time on the Kent coast.

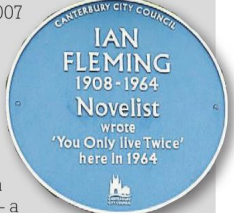
It is just one part of a tourist trail through the county which will keep Bond fans happy.

As our pictures show, the author's former home in St Margaret's Bay remains standing today (below) at the foot of the White Cliffs – the perfect place to escape the hustle and bustle of the London social scene.

The Duck Inn at Pett Bottom, to the east of Canterbury (above) remains a popular stop off for fans of the books and the films.

Visible on the wall is a special blue plaque (above right) which highlights the fact Ian Fleming sat in this building to pen the Bond book You Only Live Twice.

And even if you're not a golf fan, there's a public path which allows you to stroll across the Royal St George's course (right) – one of the last places visited by the author before his death.



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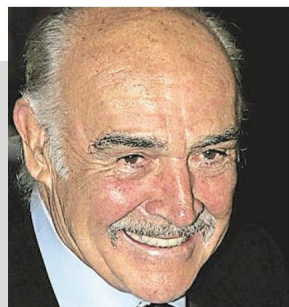
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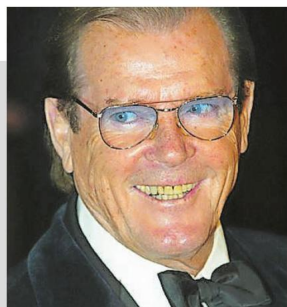
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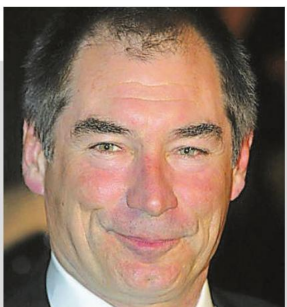
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iconic of the seven actors to have portrayed him since producer Albert R Broccoli started the



franchise in 1962 with Dr No. Of course, before that, the late great Bob Holness, who grew up



in Ashford, had portrayed Bond in a radio drama. Following Mr Connery were Roger Moore,



George Lazenby, David Niven, Timothy Dalton, Pierce Brosnan and Mr Craig. Who will be next?

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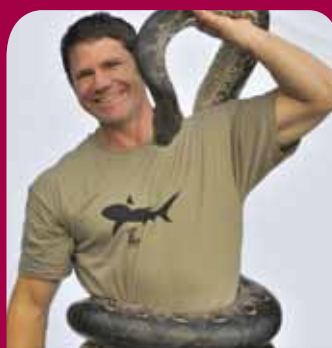
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Curtain up on theatre overhaul

Molly Kersey takes a look around a refurbished Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells after it was given a £1.5m face-lift. But, she discovers, the future of the popular venue remains far from clear...

HOW do you solve a problem like the Assembly Hall Theatre?

The debate surrounding what should be done about the 75-year-old Tunbridge Wells venue has been rumbling on for years.

The theatre, in Crescent Road, and bolted on to the back of the Town Hall, has been the subject of plenty of speculation as it strolled hand-in-hand with frequent reviews of council assets.

When there was talk of selling the Town Hall and shifting the council operation to new, modern buildings, the theatre was facing an uncertain future – despite assurances from the town's top brass such a cultural venue would not be lost.

Today, however, while a question mark continues to hang above it, it is revelling in the completion of a £1.5million refurbishment, which has seen its auditorium revamped and a new bar installed.

While not a long-term solution, it has addressed some concerns.

The council-run venue had previously been in something of a bad way, with a regular complaint being the venue had become rather dated.

While not in direct competition with its east Kent cousin – Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre – the two cannot be more different, with the city's skyline defined by its cathedral and its new glass-fronted, all-singing, all-dancing state-of-the-art theatre.

State-of-the-art is not a phrase you could ever level at the Assembly Hall, even with the best will in the world.

But the facelift is acknowledged as a temporary fix while its long-term future hangs in the balance.

"We started to get a lot of feedback from customers and essentially that centred around a number of issues," theatre director Brian McAteer explained to KoS. "Those were things like air conditioning; it was too hot, and the seating was poor; or they couldn't get to the bar to get a drink there. It was all based around customer experience."

"We have addressed all of these areas including refurbishing the bar and trying to take it back to something like a 1939 Art Deco-style as much as we could."

As well as this, work has been done behind the scenes to bring equipment and safety systems up to date, with new stage lifts due to be installed.

Mr McAteer hopes it will attract more national touring music promoters, kick-starting with punk band Slaves, who had a top 10 album, who will be performing there in December.

"It's bands of that calibre that will bring in those aged 15 to 16 and 24 to 25," he said.

The re-design work was carried out by local interior design company Style My Home. Its founder, Caroline Pickering, said: "We had to make the best of what we had. The Bakelite bar was already there and I have tried to make more of a feature of it. We wanted to get away from that custardy-yellow, it looked so aged. You have got



CHANGE: Theatre goers will be able to take advantage of a new look bar

SWITCH: The auditorium has changed too - plus seats are now black not red

a patterned carpet - I think it's made a difference to the whole room. It was either the carpets or the furnishings that had to stand out."

The future currently remains uncertain – with discussions surrounding plans proposed by consultants Stephen Browning Associates that a brand new £25m theatre could be developed on the site.

Jane March, cabinet member for tourism, leisure and economic development, said: "About three years ago David Jukes, leader of the council, suggested we might like to talk about a five-year plan. He wanted us to look at the state of the borough and one part of that was to look at Tunbridge Wells as a cultural destination for west

Kent and East Sussex, and I know after doing this cultural strategy and consultation that Tunbridge Wells is literally overflowing with creativity."

"To meet the creative needs of people and visitors we planned this refurbishment of this theatre."

"In the future we are thinking of a new theatre, but we will consult with the residents of the borough and users of the theatre and the decisions will be made after consultations - whether it's here, expanded, or a totally new theatre. But one thing we have promised is that this will stay open until we have something else to offer you - that is why we needed to make it comfortable now."

Cllr March added: "We need to

have continuity. It's so important. We are in the process of looking at various sites, very soon we will be going out to the public and consulting on those sites. It's got to be paid for and we can't raise residents' council tax to pay for it, we have one of the lowest in Kent and we can't raise it at the moment, we wouldn't expect that."

"With an older theatre, a 75-year-old theatre, you are always having to spend money – so do we bite the bullet and say something else has to be sold to pay for that?"

"Residents at consultation stage were concerned, but everyone wanted the theatre to continue. We give the theatre a small grant but it's reducing."

So would they ever give the theatre to a private buyer, to help with costs?

"I can't see us doing that," said Cllr March. "Our residents want us to have a council-run theatre because it gives them extra confidence that not only do we do the big shows but we are also there for the local groups. I think if you went to a private buyer, owner or provider that there wouldn't be the same sort of confidence."

"There will be quite big discussions about the Town Hall itself - there is more space there than we need, it's going to cost about £4.5m to totally refurbish that, so - wouldn't it be better for instance to go somewhere else and have purpose-built offices that we could have and also let half to someone else?"

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AFTER: The statue looks east, towards the Gurkha's homeland of Nepal

Ab Fab Joanna unveils statue

Long-time supporter of the Gurkha community
Joanna Lumley watched on as a seven tonne
bronze statue was unveiled in seaside town

ABSOLUTELY Fabulous star Joanna Lumley was in Folkestone last week as part of her long-running support of the Gurkha community.

The actress and TV presenter attended the town's Garden of Remembrance in Sandgate Road to unveil a special memorial to the soldiers.

Long based at Shorncliffe Barracks in the town, the Gurkhas and their families have deep roots in the area and become a key part of the community.

The 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles (2RGR) were at the ceremony which saw the unveiling of a bronze statue sculpted by Rebecca Hawkins.

It was commissioned by the Gurkha Memorial Trust as a lasting reminder of the Gurkhas – who hail from Nepal – and their long association with the town.

The statue stands almost two metres high, and weighs in at a hefty seven tonnes.

It depicts a Gurkha soldier dressed in full contemporary combat kit, wearing one of their traditional Kukri knives on his belt. It also symbolical-

ly faces east, towards the Gurkha's homeland, Nepal.

Among those who attend the unveiling were the Nepalese first lady, The Honourable Sujata Koirala; Damian Collins, the Conservative MP for Folkestone and Hythe; Joanna Lumley; Colonel James Robinson, the commanding officer of the brigade of Gurkhas and Folkestone mayor Emily Arnold.

Ms Lumley, whose father was a Gurkha officer and who was a high profile supporter of the fight to allow Gurkhas to settle in the UK after serving our armed forces in 2009, said: "It can't be over estimated how important this is for this fine statue to be here in the heart of the home of the Gurkhas in Britain, which is Folkestone."

The project was co-ordinated by a former Gurkha soldier, Dhan Gurung, who led the action by The Gurkha Memorial Fund. The fund started raising cash for the statue more than five years ago, eventually raising some £60,000.

He said: "This statue is not only a statue itself, it's about education of both communities and for forthcoming generations."

Karen England, of the Gur-

kha Welfare Trust, said: "We're really delighted to see such a good-looking statue go up to commemorate 200 years of Gurkha service. There's a very strong link between the Gurkhas and Kent and it was great to see this commemoration in Folkestone."

"Joanna is our vice-patron and having someone of her profile helping the Gurkha campaign is really important."

Mr Gurung, Ms Lumley and Peter Carroll, who has campaigned tirelessly on behalf of the Gurkhas, were presented with special medals from the Nepalese government in recognition of their efforts.

The statue is to commemorate more than 46,000 Gurkha soldiers who have sacrificed their lives in the service of the country, which has seen the award of 13 Victoria Crosses and many other awards for bravery.

After the unveiling and formal ceremonies there was a cultural show with the Nepalese Dhole Dance, Limbu tribe Rai cultural dance, Chandi Dance performing a selection of cultural dances with a Khukuri Dance from soldiers of 2 RGR rounding off the show.



RESPECT: TV star Joanna Lumley joined the dignitaries as Folkestone's Remembrance Garden last weekend. All pictures: DHARAMPRAKASH LIMBU



BEFORE: A golden hood covers the statue before the unveiling

Castle set to crumble in siege show

A dramatic depiction of the 1215 siege of Rochester Castle will take place next weekend – and it's completely free...

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

A DRAMATIC free live event which will see Rochester Castle appear to crumble before the audience's eyes – replicating one of the county's most historic events – takes place next Saturday.

The story of the siege of Rochester Castle is to be told through a mixture of live battle scenes involving actors and horses with pyrotechnics, lighting and pre-recorded footage – all bring the story to life.

Organised by Medway Council, there will be four shows taking place – each lasting 30 minutes.

The audience will be able to watch the destruction of the south east tow-

er just as it happened 800 years ago as modern-technology is used to show the building crumble, stone by stone.

The siege of the castle in 1215 is one of the most famous of the medieval period, with its outcome pivotal in King John's reign.

The monarch was coming under increasing pressure after losing land in France and a growing resentment from the barons of the land, which would ultimately result in the creation and the monarch's sealing of the Magna Carta.

Recently claimed as a vital strategic castle by John, Rochester Castle was to be handed over to the Archbishop of Canterbury, but the resulting dispute over its ownership saw rebels occupy it only for King John to lay siege to it.



DRAMA: Crowds are set to gather to watch the performances taking place Saturday, October 24

Howard Doe, Medway Council's deputy leader and portfolio holder for community services, said: "This is one of the most ambitious projects the council has ever undertaken as we bring history to life right before your eyes."

"The story of King John and the siege of Rochester Castle shaped the future of this country and this event will help tell that story to those who don't know it and also provide a spectacular way of telling it to those who do."

"This will be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see the siege as it happened and people of all ages are going to enjoy the spectacular way in which we are presenting this story."

"Imagine watching part of the cas-

tle collapse just like it did 800 years ago and you'll get a good idea, not only of the scale of this project, but the excitement it will create and I'm sure it will be talked about for many years to come."

This year marks the 800th anniversary of the siege of Rochester Castle and is one of the most historically significant years in Medway's history.

The four shows take place next Saturday, October 24. Each will last 30 minutes and run at 5.30pm, 6.30pm, 7.30pm and 8.30pm.

The event will feature an introduction from historian, Dr Marc Morris, who presented Channel 4's Castle programme.

No ticket is needed and audiences

will watch the show from designated areas around Boley Hill

The council has already run a series of events aimed to inspire and educate including special tour buses telling the unique history, a series of lectures from prominent historians at the Guildhall Museum and the successful Medieval Moments which included events all summer long at the castle.

It is also the year when the Magna Carta arrives in Rochester, to be displayed at Rochester Cathedral alongside the Textus Roffensis, which was written in Medway and is the only existing copy of the first code of English law which influenced the creation of the Magna Carta.

Bronte's classic pirouettes its way to a stage hit

Wuthering Heights took to the stage at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday this week to enthral the audience drawn to watch the Northern Ballet's production of the classic novel. We cast a critical eye...

REVIEW: By Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

"HE'S more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same."

This is how Cathy describes her feelings for Heathcliff in Emily Bronte's iconic novel Wuthering Heights – which has fascinated readers for more than 100 years.

The book translates perfectly into the dramatic art form of ballet, and Northern Ballet's production, directed by David Nixon and which has held court at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre this week, is captivating.

The show features an original score from Claude-Michel Schonberg, who also composed the music for Les Misérables and Miss Saigon.

The story begins when Cathy and Hindley's father brings scruffy child Heathcliff home to join their family.

Cathy is instantly drawn to him, causing Hindley to despise the young boy for intruding on their previously uninterrupted companionship.

When their father dies, Hindley becomes the master of Wuthering Heights and frequently subjects



him to some cruel abuse.

Despite this, kindred spirits Cathy and Heathcliff are never happier than when they are together, dancing beautifully and fluidly with one another and running wild around the moors as they grow from childhood to adulthood.

They are portrayed brilliantly during both stages of their lives – with Rachael Gillespie and Jeremy Curnier playing the young pair and Martha Leebolt and Tobias Batley playing their adult counterparts.

One day, their adventures take them to Thrushcross Grange, home to affluent siblings Edgar and Isabella Linton.

They wreak havoc on an outdoor gathering, a suitable premonition of

the impact they will have on the Linton's lives.

Cathy injures her ankle, and is separated from her beloved Heathcliff.

While she is cared for by the wealthy family and allowed to stay with them during her lengthy recovery, there is no place for wild-natured Heathcliff there, and he is forcibly removed.

It is clear to see Cathy falling in love with her surroundings, pirouetting excitedly around her lavish bedroom in the Linton household.

While she and Edgar have nothing whatsoever in common, she is drawn to the trappings of wealth, waited on by servants – one of which seems disproportionately terrified about the prospect of serving tea on a tray – and given beautiful dresses and jewellery.

When she returns to her childhood home, despite being thrilled to see Heathcliff again, her longing for these material possessions does not go away.

One thing can provide her with that wealth – a marriage to Edgar.

This is what she chooses, despite the fact that their union will never



DAZZLE: Heathcliff (Tobias Batley) and Cathy (Martha Leebolt) shone in the production

result in the same intense love she already feels for Heathcliff.

He leaves, intent on revenge, and later returns as a wealthy gentleman, plying the already damaged Hindley with alcohol and money to encourage his unhealthy gambling habit, before persuading him to sign Wuthering Heights over to him.

Despite everything, the love that

Cathy and Heathcliff feel for each other never fades, and the intense scenes where they dance together are breathtaking – including one particularly powerful one on the moors, the location of their prior carefree happiness.

Wuthering Heights ran at the Marlowe Theatre this week until Saturday.

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Famous faces leading the charge to revive England's rugby hopes

Jamie Weir takes a look at how schools are drafting in former players in a bid to bolster the teaching of rugby in our schools and the knock-on effect England's defeat has had on the county's pub trade

HISTORY teachers fitting in games teaching too in a bid for a bit of fresh air, and unqualified sixth formers helping coach teams were, for many years, the hallmarks of schoolboy rugby.

But in the wake of England's recent defeat at the hands of Australia, a defeat which dumped them out of the Rugby World Cup they were hosting at the pool stage, it seems that there could well be a grassroots renaissance, with schools across the county pumping more cash than ever before into ensuring their teams can compete at a good level.

And hopefully breeding the next group of the game's superstars.

Among the tactics used has been drafting in former international stars to coach their school teams.

The Kent Schools' Rugby Football Union – which governs and promotes the sport for schools across the county – said that the game had grown significantly over the past few years.

David Turner is a former England under-16 team selector, as well as chairman of the governance committee for England Rugby Football Schools' Union. He's been involved in the sport in Kent for decades, coaching as well as working with the Kent Schools' RFU.

He says he's confident that England – and Kent – have a good future ahead of them in rugby.

He told KoS: "An increasing number of schools want to give their pupils the best possible coaching available. They want their rugby coaches to have good qualifications, and lots of them – that's less likely if you aren't playing the sport on a professional level.

"Schools are also highly interested in keeping their pupils safe, so increasingly coaches are being required to have that deep level of knowledge about rugby that keeps all the pupils safe, and also gives them the best possible experience."

Mr Turner, from Gravesend, said that he'd started his coaching career as a teacher.

He said: "Many schools, in the past, had teachers who would get involved in sports they were interested in. I was the old fashioned type of rugby master who was also the maths teacher, and there were many who would be a Cambridge Blue, and would be happy to coach the sport."

"Nowadays more schools are looking to boost their presence in rugby by adding coaches who have international playing experience."

One of those schools is the Simon Langton Boys' Grammar School in Canterbury, which has recently taken on former Fijian international player Nicky Little. The ex-fly half has quite the rugby heritage, becoming the highest points scorer for his national side, as well as being the nephew of All



RUGBY: Former coach Dave Turner (top) and ex-Fiji international Nicky Little, who coaches at Simon Langton Boys' Grammar School in Canterbury

Blacks centre Walter Little. A veteran of four world cup campaigns, Mr Little thinks that schoolboy rugby in Kent has never been as strong as it currently is.

He said: "I can already see the difference in the boys on the field since I started in schoolboy coaching, and that was just three years ago.

"It's a much more professional system these days for many schools, and I think that really shows. Obviously it still takes schoolboys longer to learn things, because they're not professionals, but the standards are really high. The more ex-professional rugby players who come into coaching like I have, the higher the standards will get. Obviously having guys who've lived and breathed the game is better than having just a father who likes to watch the game, as we just know what's going to happen on the pitch."

Mr Little also says that schoolboy rugby is likely to provide a backbone for the national squad in years to come.

He told KoS that England should stay optimistic, despite the recent loss to both Wales and Australia.

He said: "It's okay to say the England squad just isn't good enough at the mo-

ment. I think the team got built up so much by the media that they were under such tremendous pressure that they were doomed to fail. However, we've got some amazing players who are coming through the grassroots now, so it'll improve a lot in the future."

And the future looks bright according to Mr Turner too. He told KoS there was some serious investment being poured into grassroots rugby at the moment, with a lot of cash coming from a professional club.

He said: "Saracens Rugby Club is putting a lot of time, money and effort into schoolboy rugby in Kent. Youngsters are able to progress through a system where they are monitored by the professionals from Saracens with top players getting extra coaching with a pathway mapped to top-flight rugby."

That programme has already generated more than a handful of players who have gone on to play as professionals, with the scheme likely to help more budding schoolboy amateurs get a shot at the big time. And with coaches of international standard like Mr Little, perhaps the next world cup will end on a different note for England.

EARLY EXIT LEAVES BITTER TASTE...

HOSPITALITY businesses across the county will be counting the cost of England's early exit from the Rugby World Cup.

Hopes had been high it would be a bumper autumn for pubs and sports bars across the county as England hosted the tournament.

But the shock exit of Stuart Lancaster's team in the group stages looks like it could dash those hopes.

The Locomotive Inn in Ashford had high hopes for trade over and England's loss left landlord Matt Barham nursing a bit of a rugby hangover.

He told KoS: "It has definitely put a damper on the whole tournament."

"Obviously when you have lots of wins as the host nation, it fires up everyone's imagination and gets them into the pub to watch it as a social event. Now that England are out, it'll have a knock

on effect on trade, certainly. We're expecting to see far fewer people coming in to watch the game, and we'll lose all but the most hardcore rugby fans. It's a real shame – there was a complete change in the atmosphere in the pub when England lost to Australia."

Michelle Ashbrook is the supervisor at Cassidy's Sports Bar in Tunbridge Wells. She said that the pub had been showing all the games live on TV.

She told KoS: "It could definitely have been worse for us, because we're lucky to have fans from a number of countries who have been coming in here during the tournament. We've had French fans, Irish fans and other nationalities coming in, but obviously England being knocked out will make it tougher to attract English fans, and that's never going to be great for business."

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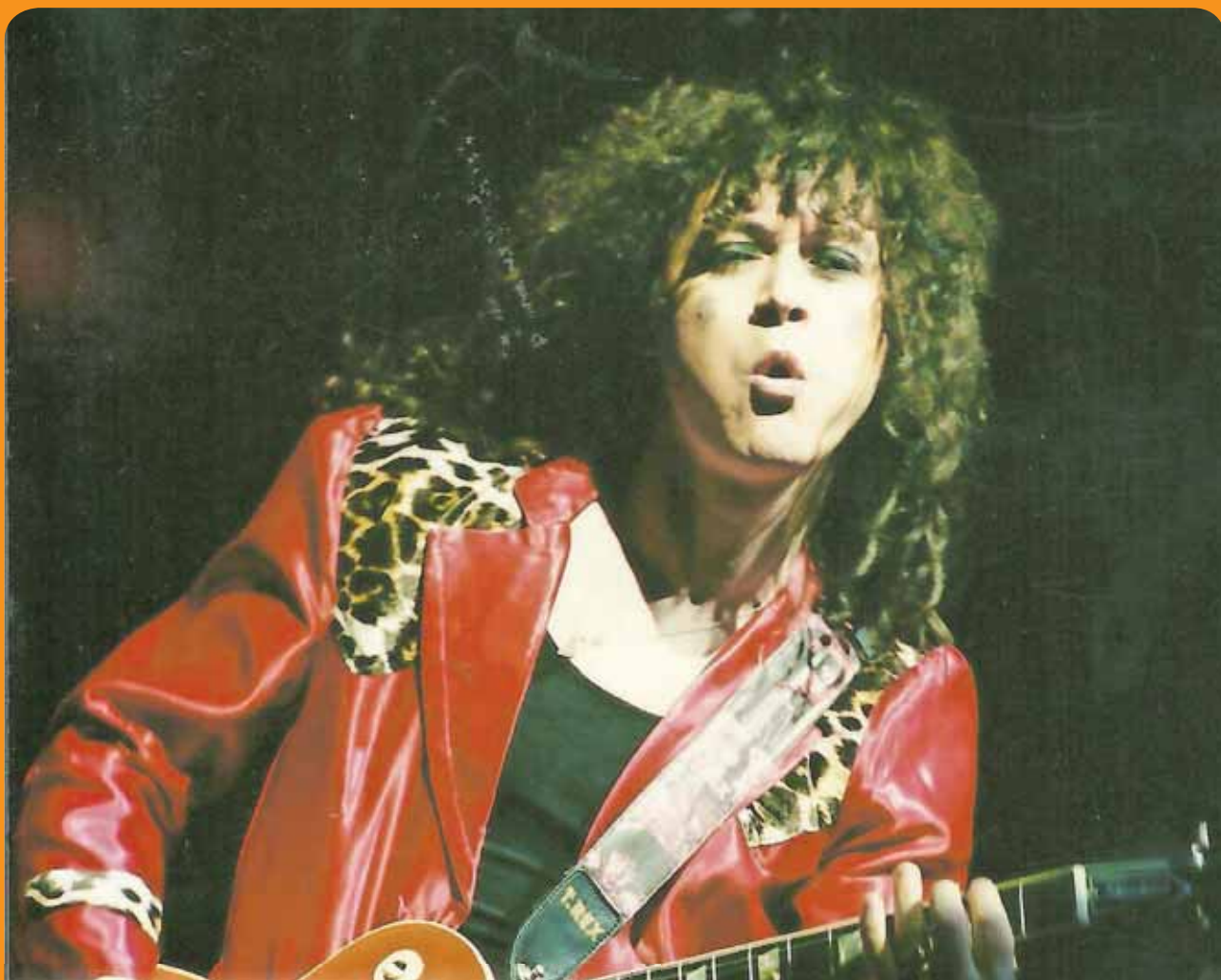
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TRIBUTE: Danielz recreates the look and sound of the performer on stage.

Performer recreates sound of legendary Marc Bolan

Molly Kersey spoke to the singer about his upcoming performances in Kent...

A SHOW recreating the look and sound of legendary performer Marc Bolan and his band T.Rex will be making its way to two Kent venues.

Tribute act T.Rextasy have been performing for some 20 years at venues all over the world.

The band was formed by frontman and lead guitarist Danielz, who was a huge fan of the original performer.

He said: "I started this in 1992.

"I was only about 12 or 13 when I first became a fan.

"I went to see them live so I was kind of there at the time. I grew up being a die-hard Marc Bolan fan.

"That gave me the inspiration to form the band after years of doing my own writing and performing. I wanted to play the music that I had grown up to love."

The band are endorsed by Marc Bolan's family, as well as original members of T.Rex.

"I have been fortunate, a lot of people have shown their support including Marc Bolan's family and members of his own band," explained Danielz.

"That gives us a lot more kudos. "His son came up on stage with us once, that was a nice thing to happen."

So what can people expect from the performances?

"Hopefully people will come along and have a really good, uplifting time," said Danielz.

"It's a very up-tempo show. We do encourage people to dress up a little bit because it's a glam rock type of performance.

"We give a very good, uplifting show and people go away hopefully feeling very happy."

And he said that each show being the best it can be is extremely important to him.

"For every gig, when I go onstage it feels like the first time. I have still got that passion and I feel nervous before I go on stage," he said.

"I want to give a good show and I know there is a lot of real original, die-hard fans out there, so I want to do the best I can."

He added: "What people tend to do is shout out songs they want played at me. If those songs are not in our set I tend to, in between songs, play a couple of verses just for that person.

"I think that's nice, and important. It gives you a one to one bond with that person that's paid money to see you, if they go away thinking 'they played that just for me.'"

"We play for nearly two hours. In that time we play all the hits that

people want to hear but the die-hard fans that have been around as long as I have might want to hear the odd album track, or a B-side."

I Love To Boogie with T.Rextasy will be performed at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, and the Britannia Theatre, Chatham.

"T.Rex actually played at the Leas Cliff Hall, and we have played there before a few times as well in the past, so it will be nice to return there," he said.

"We haven't played at the Britannia Theatre before."

The show in Folkestone takes places on Wednesday (October 14) and the Chatham show is on Friday (October 16).

Visit www.atgtickets.com/folkstone or www.thebritanniakent.com for more information or to book tickets.

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Women Seeking

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PAT, 68, young at heart, slim, proud 4' 11" GSOH, N/S, likes walking etc. Whistable area, seeks similar slim easy going male 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busy brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 515 4288 Box 418117

CHANTELLE, 51/3 light brown/blonde hair, blue eyes, like nights in/out, walks, animals, romance seeks honest guy, Littlehampton. Text only to Mailbox no: 4923883

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. Pls call, ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 4298 Box 418167

MARIE, very lonely middle-aged woman, looking for a kind hearted older man, late 70s/early 80s for friendship/companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418955

CHRISTINA, curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, using very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Tel No: 0906 515 4288 Box 410127

RACHEL late 40s, blonde, blue eyes and very voluptuous. Looking for a kind, caring honest man. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418741

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4274 Box: 405297

ESSEX lady, mid 60s, adaptable, seeking nice male, likes most things. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418537

LAUREN, 32yrs, recently divorced, own home and 2 kids seeks single dads or older chap. Text only to Mailbox No: 4127590

JACKIE, 32, attractive professional, very smart and feminine, long brown hair, seeks smart, confident, older male who knows how to treat a lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416297

BECKY, 23, classy blonde, long blonde hair, blue eyes seeks loving older guy to spoil and pamper her. Discretion assured/guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416233

JANINE, 36, faithful, sincere, will never stray seeking similar male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414629

BLODIE female, 47, looking for fun, sensual, experienced, understanding, seeking similar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415675

PETITE Asian lady, slim, N/S, seeks genuine N/S male for wine/dinner, fun and frolics. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414515

HELEN, widow 58, medium build, 5ft 4ins, blonde, GSOH, likes a chat, days out, looking to start again with someone of similar age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376243

KAREN, 51yrs, never been married and does not want to be! Just wants a nice kind hearted chap for dates, texts etc. Text only to Mailbox No: 4032409

FEMALE, 59, GSOH, many interests, seeks caring male for fun friendship maybe more, genuine calls only. Text only to Mailbox No: 4819793

GORGEOUS flower, Ashford Kent, 51, larger lady, large personality, easy going, seeks male who likes dogs, animals for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417435

FEMALE easy going, kind, loving, genuine, romantic, car boots, gardening, seeking male with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417603

SUSIE fit, friendly, looking for someone to love and look after me, preferably, older, N/S male with own car. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392537

HAPPY young looking lady, 62, likes socialising, conversation, seeking nice man to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407383

KATIE, 5ft 5, slim dark hair, very attractive female, likes most things in life and a good laugh, looking for a similar male. Text only to Mailbox No: 4722127

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874

BLODIE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025

JAN, 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ATTRACTIVE lady early 50s, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTm professional, caring gent, 50-60s for attention and future together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416569

RACHEL attractive, blue eyes, blonde, voluptuous, seeking kind, honest, generous kind male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418403

JAN, 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ALISON, 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517

ALISON, 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497

DEBORAH, 41, intelligent brunette, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515

ATTRACTIVE black, athletic lady, varied interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416215

MAY sexy black African female, 38, hardworking, seeks generous friendly male for mutual rewarding friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416211

SUE young at heart, good looking, enjoys life, socialising, beach walks, gardening, theatre, seeking male, 55-65 to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 41671

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JOHN, 47, six foot two, well-built, handsome, non-smoker, intelligent and funny, doesn't take himself too seriously, easy to get along with, seeks attractive female, any age, for discreet, adventurous, any time fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419203

NICE looking genuine man would like to meet nice lady any age for company, outings with GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 4922399

ANDREW, 63, likes animals, walking, boat fares, shopping, looking for someone similar living in the Maidstone/Kent area, for possible LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419203

MALE 56, likes good conversation, seeks older lady for discreet friendly fun, 50 plus. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419201

MALE 51, 5ft 8ins, N/S, GSOH, easygoing, seeks slim female, 18-45 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 338269

LINDA, 26, cheeky, curvy brunette, a little shy at first, likes to look after herself, seeks dark haired male for discreet naughty but fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416195

LISA attractive petite Filipino female, very lonely, wanting to find love, companionship and to be happy, looking for friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415549

LUCY stunning tall brunette, looking for exciting times, seeks like-minded, adventurous male who is willing to try anything once or maybe even twice! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416079

PETITE blonde, blue eyes, very feminine and sensual seeks younger male for friendship and discreet fun. Can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416077

SARAH 29yr old pretty slim single mum of one, interesting, lively, good fun, enjoys nights in/out, music, seeking similar easy going, genuine, honest man/dad to get to know. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415841

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MATTHEW, five foot eleven, looking for a mature lady for discreet friendship and a few laughs. Dartford area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419469

ALAN, 49yrs, kind chap with own building business, been broken hearted and seeks kind caring lady, looks unimportant. Text only to Mailbox No: 4105813

45 year old male, looking for a happy intelligent friendly female for company and evenings in or out, looks or race unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 5063649

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749

SUGAR Daddy available! Mature, tall, slim, natural dark hair, seeks lady, age unimportant. Not afraid of commitment. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418889

SIMON, 50, actor, loves music, films, reading, writing, loopholes, ambiguity, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia, WLTm a pretty leggy female, 35 years plus for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418827

MALE 57, seeking honest, reliable, genuine lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418535

MALE widower, N/S, likes reading, walking, WLTm lady 50-70 for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418173

ANGIE attractive nurse 39yrs, new to area/advertising, likes dog walking, being sociable, meals in/out, WLTm honest fun male for possible ltr. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415827

SUE, 65, 5ft 8ins, blonde hair, fashionable, smoker, GSOH, enjoys meals out, travel, animals, WLTm kind, stylish man for friendship, maybe more. Thanet area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415735

INTELLIGENT funny guy without a huge ego required for damaged heart. Casey 39, size 10, curves in all the right places, pretty, kind, loving, genuine, romantic and available. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415509

BLACK lady 43, sincere, down to earth, fun loving, likes theatre, cinema, meals out, walks, seeking white gent with GSOH, sincere and down to earth. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415477

JENNY voluptuous blonde tanned well-presented female, enjoys being and giving pampering, cooking, cosy nights, looking for some broadminded excitement. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415399

BARRY 47, 6ft, well built, seeks female for wine, dining and fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 361787

VINCENT, 48, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416845

HAPPY go lucky divorced man, 48, 6ft, well built, seeks gorgeous female to share love and laughs with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383719

GARY, 48, 6ft, well-built, dark hair, brown eyes, seeks passionate female for fun times in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387175

BARRY 49, 6ft, well built, kind, affectionate, loving, seeks special lady for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 393855

MALE 70's, fit, looking for lady to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416663

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015

MALE 57, seeking honest, reliable, genuine lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418535

69YR old male, professional, 5ft 10ins, fit, medium build, young outlook, reliable, sincere, likes most things seeks slim, slender, uncomplicated lady. Kent/Surrey. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418531

RICHARD, 63, N/S, clean-shaven, likes meals out, days out, classic cars, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418517

JOHN young 50, tall, slim, hardworking, seeking business/professional female for discreet meetings, can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418461

JONATHAN good looking, considerate, long curly hair, N/S, seeks tall, slim female, 30-45. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418451

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, weekends away, cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641

49YR old male, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390929

48YR old divorced male, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun and laughter. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380789

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ASHFORD male, 66, GSOH, easy going, smoker, down to earth, adventures, seeks like-minded female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416845

55YR old male, 5ft 9ins, slim, likes swimming, pool, seeking female for fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418265

COMPANION sought, 50-60's by slim, young looking 65yr old man for cinema, music, eating, drinking, talking and laughter. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418257

PAUL, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tunbridge Wells. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

PAUL, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

MALE 57, seeking honest, reliable, genuine lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418535

69YR old male, professional, 5ft 10ins, fit, medium build, young outlook, reliable, sincere, likes most things seeks slim, slender, uncomplicated lady. Kent/Surrey. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418531

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PAUL, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195



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ASHFORD male, 66, GSOH, easy going, smoker, down to earth, adventures, seeks like-minded female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416845

55YR old male, 5ft 9ins, slim, likes swimming, pool, seeking female for fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418265

COMPANION sought, 50-60's by slim, young looking 65yr old man for cinema, music, eating, drinking, talking and laughter. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418257

PAUL, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

PAUL, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

MALE 57, seeking honest, reliable, genuine lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418535

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JONATHAN good looking, considerate, long curly hair, N/S, seeks tall, slim female, 30-45. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418451

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, weekends away, cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611

PAUL, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

M A L E widower, N/S, seeks buxom lady, 50-70, likes reading, 60's music, pub quizzes and crosswords. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417905

BRIAN 71, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, music, walks, seeks female with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417697

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

PAUL, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

MALE 57, seeking honest, reliable, genuine lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418535

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RICHARD, 63, N/S, clean-shaven, likes meals out, days out, classic cars, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418517

JOHN young 50, tall, slim, hardworking, seeking business/professional female for discreet meetings, can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515

Hits from beloved musicals to be performed in a stage show

by Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

A NEW musical is aiming to take audiences on a whistlestop tour of the hits of well-loved West End Broadway shows.

Mad About The Musicals will be making its way to the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury, later this month.

The show, which is now in its 10th year, will be starring Gareth Gates and Michael Courtney, who will be performing alongside a West End cast.

Mad About the Musicals features a number of songs from musicals penned by Rodgers and Hammerstein, Kander and Ebb, Boublil and Schonberg and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

The show marks a welcome return to the Canterbury venue for Mr Gates, who also took to the stage there when he performed in pantomime Sleeping Beauty back in 2012.

He said: "I had a great time in Canterbury a few years ago when I played Prince Charming in pantomime and I'm looking forward to



MUSICALS: Michael Courtney and Gareth Gates will perform

returning with Mad About The Musicals.

"It showcases the best songs from musicals throughout the years and includes many of my favourites."

Mr Gates first shot to fame when he took part in the inaugural Pop Idol TV show, becoming a household name and making it to the finals - where he went up against Will Young.

He went on to sell more than five million records worldwide, with his version of Unchained Melody selling more than a million copies in the UK.

He has also appeared in musicals including Les Miserables, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat and Legally Blonde.

Mad About The Musicals will be performed at the Marlowe Theatre

on Sunday (October 18).

The performance will be starting at 7.30pm.

Tickets to the show range from £24.50 to £29, with concessions available.

For more information about what the show has to offer or to book tickets you can visit www.marlowetheatre.com.

Alternatively call the box office on 01227 787787.

Celebrating Oktoberfest

AN Oktoberfest-themed event will be taking place at the Freewheel Pub and Cycling Cafe in Graveney, near Faversham, on October 17 and 18. For details, visit www.thefreewheel.pub.



Peter Pan in Maidstone

PANTOMIME Peter Pan will be performed at the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone, from December 4 at January 3 2016.

EastEnders star Ricky Groves will take on the role of Captain Hook.

Tickets are £12. To book, visit www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk.

Dartford gets Footloose

FOOTLOOSE: The Musical, will be performed at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford, from February 8 to 13 2016.

For more details or to book tickets, to the show visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.



Musical encourages smile

MUSICAL Smile will be performed at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on October 18 at 7.30pm.

The show features songs including When You're Smiling, Don't Worry Be Happy and Walking on Sunshine.

For details visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley.



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Jim Davidson: Charlton Nil

COMEDIAN Jim Davidson will be bringing his new show Charlton Nil to the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on November 11.

To book visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley.



Dave Gorman on stage

DAVE Gorman will be bringing his new comedy show to the Central Theatre, Chatham, on January 29 2016.

The performance will be starting at 8pm and tickets are £24.

For more information, or to book tickets to the show, visit tickets.medway.gov.uk.

Alice in Wonderland

SURREALIST artist Peter Smith has unveiled his new collection, Lost Alice, at the Castle Galleries in Bluewater Shopping Centre.

It features six oil paintings and four sculptures.



UB40 due in Margate

BAND UB40 will be performing at the Margate Winter Gardens.

The group will take to the stage on Saturday (October 17) and the performance will be starting at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £30. To book, visit www.margatewintergardens.co.uk.

Book festival offers life stories and memoirs

By Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

THE Folkestone Book Festival will provide audiences with an insight into the experiences of others - with memoirs, life stories and stars' biographies explored.

The annual festival will run from November 20 to 29, featuring a variety of informative talks from specialist speakers in the Folkestone Quarterhouse.

It will be opened with Captain Corelli's Mandolin author Louis de Bernieres switching on the Christmas lights in the town's creative quarter.

Talks will delve into topics including what it is like to work in the music industry and the lives of celebrities.

On November 28 at 12.30pm, Mark Ellen will be interviewing TV writer, stand-up comedian and crime novelist Mark Billingham.

His books, including a series featuring London-based detective Tom Thorne, have been commercially and critically acclaimed.

Henry Marsh, author of the acclaimed memoir Do No Harm: Stories of Life, will be discussing



what it is like to be a brain surgeon during his talk, which will take place on November 29 at 1pm.

He will be sharing how it feels to have someone's life in your hands, and how to live with the consequences when things go wrong.

Singer, songwriter and half of musical duo Everything but the Girl, Tracey Thorn, will be speaking to Andy Miller about the touring, hits and highs and lows of her singing career on November 29 at 6.30pm.

Ms Thorn's memoir Bedsit Disco

Queen was followed by the recent release Naked at the Albert Hall - offering an insight into singing.

On November 29 at 3.30pm, the UK's leading celebrity biographer Sean Smith will offer an insight into the world of the rich and famous. His biographies include Cheryl - the definitive biography of Cheryl Cole.

For more information about the events the festival you can visit www.folkestonebookfest.com.

Alternatively you can call the box office on 01303 760750.



WRITER: Mark Ellen will be interviewing Mark Billingham



SPECIALIST: Henry Marsh will talk about his career as a surgeon

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Helping those with breast cancer to enjoy food

A new book features scientifically-informed and nutritious recipes to help people during treatment

It might be one of the less talked about elements of breast cancer, but with treatments often causing side-effects like exhaustion, reduced appetite, soreness of mouth and an upset stomach, meal-times can be a minefield.

And all those conflicting reports in the media about which foods might cause cancer and which might prevent it, don't do much to help.

Sensing the understandable confusion among his patients, Professor Mohammed Keshtgar, a consultant breast cancer specialist at London's Royal Free hospital, set to work on The Breast Cancer Cookbook, a collection of scientifically-informed, nutritious and enjoyable recipes, which he promises are "simple, easy to cook

and easy to understand".

"We advise things like cool smoothies and avoiding spicy or sour foods that can irritate ulcers," adds Mr Keshtgar.

"We also advise plenty of fluids during this period [of treatment] and food with a stronger flavour, so while [patients might] have issues with the taste sensation, they can still enjoy their food as much as possible."

The book also clears up some commonly held myths.

"A lot of people stop taking dairy [when they're diagnosed with breast cancer]," says the professor.

"We think that's not right. We don't think dairy can cause or promote breast cancer.

"Dairy is a very important source



FOOD: The recipes featured in the book are scientifically-informed

of calcium, especially for patients who are undergoing treatment for breast cancer; the tablets given to them can sometimes cause weakness of the bones."

Generally speaking, he does recommend eating more pulses and soy, whose structure "resembles the structure of oestrogen without any of the hormonal values" and is thought to help offer a "protective effect" against breast cancer by "preventing cancer cell growth".

But the recipes aren't solely aimed at people who've been diagnosed with breast cancer; they could be part of anybody's healthy lifestyle and in that sense, Keshtgar hopes, aid in the prevention of the disease.

On this front, he notes that eating

plenty of fibre and keeping fat intake - especially saturated fat - low, is important, as well as "being physically active".

"The recommendations are quite simple," says Mr Keshtgar.

"What we emphasise is that people should be taking in balanced diets," he added.

"We hope the book will go a long way for patients and give them another resource to refer to," he adds.

"The effects of diet and lifestyle are long-standing; it just doesn't happen within days and months.

"But if one changes the actual habit over a long period of time, it's another factor that we can at least use in the prevention of development of cancer."

Robin Hood on stage

PANTOMIME Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood will be performed in Gravesend.

The show features EastEnders star Ricky Norwood and B*Witched sisters Keavy and Edele Lynch.

It will be at the Woodville Halls from December 11 to January 3 2016.

For more details or to book tickets visit www.woodville.co.uk.

Peppa Pig has surprise

A live show featuring beloved children's character Peppa Pig will be performed in Dartford later this month.

Peppa Pig's Surprise will be on stage at the Orchard Theatre from October 23 to 25.

Life size puppets will be used to portray Peppa, her parents and her brother George, and the show will feature a number of songs.

To book visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Elkie celebrates 70th

SUCCESSFUL Singer Elkie Brooks will be celebrating her 70th birthday with a tour of the UK.

The show will be making its way to the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on November 7 at 7.30pm.

Tickets range from £26.40 to £28.40.

For more information or to book tickets to the show you can visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley.

Vivienne Westwood

AN exhibition exploring the work of fashion designer Vivienne Westwood will be at Danson House, Hall Place, Bexley, until October 31.

The exhibition brings together a number of her designs and examines the collections that proved to be a turning point.

Admission to the exhibition is £8.

Visit www.bexleyheritagetrust.org.uk for further details.

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Art delivers a powerful message

TRAVEL REVIEW: Prague

by Karen Bowerman

I'm suspended in a glass observation pod, clamped to a 216m tower – the highest building in the Czech capital, Prague – and I'm beginning to freak out.

But the height has nothing to do with it. The culprits are 10 monstrous (in both senses of the word) sculpted babies, who are crawling (make that prowling) up the building's three "legs" towards me.

They're the creation of the city's very own enfant terrible, the internationally-renowned artist David Cerny, whose work, which often has a political message, also has a tendency to shock. It's certainly doing that; I feel as if I'm being targeted by mutants. The babies' buttocks are inappropriately taunted and their heads bloated. Even worse, they have imploded faces, as if their features have been sucked out of a vertical slit and replaced with a barcode.

My guide, Katerina Sedlakova, tries to distract me as she draws my attention to the building.

Zizkov Tower, where we have a fabulous view of Prague, is now an observatory and communications centre. But Katerina tells me it was built in the eighties, so the former communist regime could block incoming TV and radio signals from the west.

"All media was controlled. When I was a child, anti-government demonstrations which made front page news across the world, were never mentioned here. My parents gave up reading the newspaper."

Cerny rarely gives an explanation for his work, but I'm beginning to form one of my own. As I learn more about him, my response to his babies is changing. I now see adults stifled by totalitarianism, their identity lost and growth stunted. They scale the



EXPLORE: Many visit Prague for the ancient bridges and architecture

tower but make no headway. I feel embarrassed I was initially repulsed by them. Cerny has delivered his message.

Most people visit Prague for its ancient bridges, cobbled streets and glorious architecture. Eating out is attractive too, with prices cheap and portions generous; a pint costs around £1, a traditional meal £4.

I've come, however, to explore the city's emerging districts – to experi-

ence the grittier side of this ridiculously romantic capital.

The Zizkov Tower, 6km southeast of city centre, is just a 10-minute ride by metro, yet few tourists tend to visit. The area was once covered with vineyards, planted by Charles IV, the 14th century king of Bohemia who planned the layout of Prague.

Today, streets are lined with art nouveau mansions, a phenomenal number of bars and the odd, elegant cafe.

On the way to the tower, Katerina and I pass Jiriho z Podebrad Square. At its centre is The Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord church, that's soon to become a Unesco World Heritage site. Built in the 1930s, its grey brickwork, flecked with white, resembles a king's ermine, in honour of Charles IV.

Nearby is Vinohrady Pavilion, one of the district's former factories. Its clean, spacious interior has glass-fronted designer stores and a retro-

TRAVEL FACTS

Karen Bowerman was a guest of the Mandarin Oriental. Visit www.mandarinoriental.com/prague. Kirker Holidays (www.kirkerholidays.com; 020 7593 2283) offers a three-night stay at the hotel from £749pp including flights, private car transfers, a deluxe room and breakfast. A private guided walking tour and the services of the Kirker Concierge are also included.

style cafe. The menu offers 40 types of tea, including Argentinian matte, olive leaf and pomegranate.

I'm about to suggest we stop for a cuppa when Katerina has another idea. She takes me to Prosekarna, a tiny bar that specialises in Prosecco.

We perch on cork-shaped bar stools and enjoy a glass for £1.70. Of course, Prague isn't all about prices. But even at the deluxe Mandarin Oriental, you can still get a pre-dinner cocktail for under a fiver.

I sit at the bar as a fellow diner cracks open a ball of mango juice (frozen with liquid nitrogen) to create her own bitter vodka Martini, then head to the hotel's Spices restaurant for dinner, where dishes include Thai crab cakes with mango chilli mayonnaise and beef ribs with Sri Lankan red pepper curry.

The hotel's entertained Kylie Minogue, Madonna and the Dalai Lama.

The hotel's history is equally intriguing. Built on the site of a former Dominican monastery, you can have coffee in the cloisters, party in the chapter house and get married in the refectory – now a ballroom with glittering chandeliers.

Film Reviews by Damon Smith



SICARIO

(15, 121 mins) Thriller/Action

EMILY Blunt plays Kate Macer, part of the FBI's Special Weapons and Tactics team, who are at the forefront of the war against drugs. Kate storms a safe house and uncovers dozens of rotting corpses.

Government agent Matt Graver asks Kate to join his top-secret task force, which intends to cripple the cartel from the top down.

Haunted by the loss of men under her command, Kate signs up and heads to El Paso for her briefing, where she learns she will be venturing onto Mexican soil.

A Colombian former prosecutor with a personal vendetta joins the task force. Bullets fly and Kate's conscience is spattered in blood as she witnesses first-hand shocking brutality in violation of the laws she vowed to uphold.

THE WALK

(PG, 123 mins) Drama/Romance/Action

DIRECTOR Robert Zemeckis dramatises Philippe Petit's incredible walk along a wire strung between the two towers of the

World Trade Center in 1974.

Philippe hones his circus skills on the streets of the French capital, where he meets busker Annie.

A newspaper article about the construction of the World Trade Center fires Philippe's imagination and he concocts a hare-brained scheme to traverse the 140 feet of air between the two buildings.

Circus ringmaster Papa Rudy helps Philippe prepare for the physical rigours, despite serious misgivings. Philippe flies to the Big Apple with Annie, official photographer Jean-Louis and Jean-Francois, who is afraid of heights.

The wire walker adds Americans to the team, including Barry Greenhouse, who works on the 82nd floor of the south tower.

The accomplices break into the two towers to secure a wire under the cover of darkness so the daredevil can begin his record-breaking attempt as the sun rises.



REGRESSION

(15, 106 mins) Thriller

IN 1990 Minnesota, John Gray makes a confession to the police about sexually abusing his 17-year-old daughter Angela during a satanic ritual.

Detective Bruce Kenner enlists the services of psychoanalyst Dr

Kenneth Raines to use regression therapy to piece together the truth from John and Angela's fractured memories.

These testimonies cast a dark shadow over the close-knit community and force Kenner to interrogate Angela's reclusive grandmother Rose and his own colleague about their knowledge of the heinous crime.

HEDGEHOG populations are in trouble. They've declined by 30 per cent in the last 10 years alone and there are now thought to be fewer than a million left in the UK, according to the RHS.

So, what can gardeners do about it? This year, the RHS and The Wildlife Trusts are teaming up with the campaign Hedgehog Street during Wild About Gardens Week to encourage us to make gardens, schools and community spaces hedgehog-friendly.

"Improving your gardens for invertebrate groups will encourage hedgehogs into the garden, as insects, slugs, snails and earthworms are the hedgehog's natural food source," says Helen Bostock, RHS senior horticultural adviser.

Hedgehogs are not herbivores, so will not feast on leaves, flowers or other plant matter, but they will feed on the pollinating insects and other species which are attracted to particular plants.

As well as feeding on slugs and snails, hedgehogs also eat groups of beetles, caterpillars, earthworms and even birds' eggs, as well as meat-based dog and cat food, or dry hedgehog food available from garden centres and online.

"There's going to be an indirect benefit when it comes to plant choice," says Ms Bostock.

"If you increase invertebrates you will encourage the hedgehogs' natural food sources."

At this time of year, just before hi-



TROUBLE: Hedgehog populations have declined.

Prickly subject of hedgehogs

bernation, good pollinating plants including asters, dahlias, Japanese anemones, sedums and *Verbena bonariensis* will all encourage just the type of invertebrates hedgehogs need to get them through the winter.

At other times of the year, a mix of flower shapes will attract a variety of insects, from tall foxgloves, to climbing honeysuckles, ornamental alli-

ums, salvias, single flowered roses and herbs, including rosemary and chives.

Bear in mind that hedgehogs only have short legs and don't do well on steep inclines, she says.

“Remove potential hazards. Any steep sides on ponds can lead to hedgehogs drowning. Create a gentle ramp to allow them easy access in

and out of the water.

"Check bonfire piles before you light them, as hedgehogs may be hiding underneath them and be careful when strimming long grass, where they may be found. Also, don't leave litter or items like fruit cage netting loose for hedgehogs to get caught up in. Open drains and trenches can also cause problems."

Wild About Gardens Week will also be encouraging people to create 13cm x 13cm hedgehog holes in fences, walls and other barriers to allow these creatures to access different gardens for food and shelter.

Wild About Gardens Week runs from October 26 to November 1. For details go to www.wildaboutgardensweek.org.uk/events.

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Trident protects us even not used

WHY is it that your correspondents who oppose a nuclear deterrent persistently refuse to recognise that the point is not to use it but to deter others from using theirs on us?

The expenditure is like an insurance policy, which one hopes will never be actually called upon, but without which one is left totally exposed.

To dispose of it would be to send a signal to nuclear powers ill disposed to us that they could blackmail us with impunity.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

We must lobby now to save NHS

BETTY Renz raises the issue of the fight between the three main hospitals in east Kent and the distance patients have to travel (Letters, last week).

An excellent study in the Emergency Medicine Journal demonstrates that every 10km increase in distance is associated with a one per cent absolute increase in mortality.

Despite this, it is government policy to downgrade district general hospitals and reduce the number of major A+E centres in England from 141 to between 40-70. At least 66 A&E and maternity units have closed since 2010.

We already have the lowest number of hospital beds in Europe (per head), less doctors than Estonia and Bulgaria (we are 27 out of 29 in the EU), and spend less GDP than the other G7 countries (now fallen to 7.3 per cent).

Starving a service of resources is a well-known trick to persuade the public "private is better". As a GP of 30 years, I assure you it is not.

The NHS is still alive but is like a tree. If the roots are cut and poisoned, which is what this government is doing, you won't notice until the tree suddenly falls over and dies. The public must lobby now before it is too late.

Dr Paul Hobday,
Horsmonden

Corbyn? Set the corgis on him!

I WANTED to write to you about what I think of Jeremy Corbyn.

I do not like the man one bit.

I was very angry at the snub to the Queen by him not singing the National Anthem. I would like to set

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Is it time for long running saga to end?

AS I return to Walmer to close down the caravan for the season, I picked up a copy of the Kent on Sunday to find that the war of words continues between Phil Granger, St Duff and Christopher Hudson Gool (KoS letters, throughout 2015), plus an Alan Turling too.

Unfortunately, I am now going to miss this continuing saga as at the end of the month the caravan site closes until March 2016.

Far be it for me to comment further as I am not privy to the subjects causing such controversy, but will comment that each gentleman is entitled to his views, however strong they may be, as it is always, I allege, a question of interpretation. One man's meat is another man's poison and somewhat vitriolic in these cases it would seem.

So may I suggest that the true democratic way to deal with such disputes is to beg to differ and not dictate because, gentlemen, you

are all right and should refrain from trying to ram your views down other people's throats.

You are all probably right in your way, so why not bury the hatchet but not in each other's heads and get on with your lives in this 21st century?

Makes for interesting reading though!

John Gamet
Keston

The good news, Mr Gamet, is that you don't have to miss the relentless correspondence on this issue - which is now, remarkably, in its fifth month of weekly discussion.

You can access every edition of Kent on Sunday - wherever you are in the world - in full, for free, via our website.

To access it, all you have to do is visit www.kentnews.co.uk and click on the e-edition.

Meanwhile, the debate continues below!

Come on Ray, don't miss point

IT OCCURS to me that one reason Ray Duff's debates go on for so long (KoS letter, ad nauseum) is that he is so intent on pushing his points that he misses the points made by others.

He did it again in his dismissal of what I had to say on vehicle emissions as "blown out of the water".

While what VW did was not right, it affects my original point not in the slightest, which makes

Ray's statement blatantly untrue; when I was youngster you were left in a choking cloud of diesel fumes when buses and lorries went past. That is no longer usually the case.

Over the years, all vehicles, whatever the fuel, have been "cleaned". Not that there cannot be more improvement, but our air is overall cleaner, and the moral panic and fuss over the VW affair is out of all proportion, as are some of the figures being bandied about regarding costs and diseases and premature deaths.

I stand by what I have said, knowing some will disagree. That goes for the disingenuous "climate denier" slur too: I am happy to declare myself a climate alarm sceptic, as are many reputable scientists, whose numbers are growing.

The use of that term is akin to Ray's opponents calling him a "God denier" because of his religious disbelief. (For the record I am firmly agnostic).

I notice Ray nearly always advances views as "evidenced facts", even when they obviously aren't or are at least in doubt. Everyone else, however, has "views open to robust challenge". I would have more sympathy with some of his other views if only he refrained from demanding "equality" when the situation is really one of one minority group taking a situation of advantage.

For example, in the furore over gay marriage rights it has conveniently been forgotten that while gay couples can now have a civil partnership or a full marriage, straight couples are denied the civil partnership. That is not equality. Whether it should be I'll not get involved in.

I have said my piece, stated my case, so this is my final word on this particular subject for the time being.

Ian Taylor,
Dover

Rod Stewart stood on my flares

FURTHER to your article about witnessing famous bands (KoS, last week), I remember when I was about 12 knocking on the Pretty Things [rock band from which the Rolling Stones would emerge] door in Welling and getting their autographs.

At Bexley United football ground in the 1970s often lots of famous stars played charity matches and my claim to fame is that Rod Stewart stood on my flared trousers after landing by helicopter with his girlfriend at the time Dee Harrington.

Christine Shaw,
via email

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.
- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.



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By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

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IBIZA: It is named after a holiday destination and has been about - in current form - since 2008 but it is still pulling in the crowds

Major makeover for Ibiza

PREVIEW: Spanish 'sunshine supermini' will bathe in the market's rays for a bit longer after getting a new look – on show soon

NAMED after a holiday island favourite, it seems the current SEAT Ibiza will stay in the sun for some time – VW's Spanish arm is not likely to replace it until 2017.

Which means the fourth generation car will have done nine years' service since its 2008 launch, a long time when Japanese and Korean marques typically replace models at five years.

The good news is that the Ibiza is a good looking and distinctive car – whether in sporty three-door SC, five-door, or rakish ST estate format – so the revised version arriving soon will be almost unchanged externally, while power-trains, chassis, interior trim and infotainment have been upgraded substantially.

Visually, the only clue to change is new headlamps with LED running lights, but customers can now have the light, low emission and frugal yet punchy 1.0-litre three-cylinder petrol engine that has been such a hit in SEAT's Mii city car.

This will be offered in 74bhp or turbocharged 89bhp and 109bhp outputs and the other exciting news is the availability of VW's clever 1.4-litre petrol Active Cylinder Technology (ACT).

I've marvelled before at how this unit shuts



down half its four cylinders when cruising steadily, saving on fuel; it could be a saviour for the VW group overall as it labours under the diesel emissions scandal.

But diesel won't be disappearing overnight, so expect new diesel units too for the revised Ibiza, which is also tipped to ride more smoothly; the Ibiza has always been good to

drive, but a little harsh for some.

The ageing interior also gets plusher materials and optional customising to liven it up, with an all-new infotainment touchscreen as the dashboard centrepiece and easy connectivity for smartphones and apps – a development bringing the SEAT in line with group sisters, the Skoda Fabia and VW Polo.

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MG3 Fuel consumption mpg (l/100km) for MG3 Range: Urban: 37.7 (7.5), Extra Urban 57.6 (4.9), Combined 48.7 (5.8), CO2 Emissions 136 g/km.

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XC70 – Volvo's proper lifestyle estate

With rugged looks, all-wheel drive and extra ground clearance, Volvo's XC70 offers decent off-road ability plus estate car practicality, writes **Steve Loader**...

VOLVO has changed its image in recent years, now being strongly associated with the ocean racing and 'yottie' scene and stylish and capable XC series SUVs.

But the Swedish marque also used to be king of estate cars, selling more of these than saloons to discerning Brits needing a smart yet capacious wagon.

They were highly regarded by antique dealers particularly: posher than a humble van, but versatile enough to swallow a lump of furniture.

Fortunately, and for some 15 years now, Volvo has offered something that straddles this traditional estate sector and the in vogue SUV arena – it's the XC70.

The XC (cross-country) prefix, says it comes with all-wheel drive (AWD) – though you can have a front-wheel drive (FWD) only version – raised suspension, plus bolt-on kit that allows it to endure biffs and bashes on muddy tracks or during limited off-roading – vets and antique dealers with rural clients must love it.

However, there has to be a price for all this: financially, from £36,400 for



the AWD versions, while the car's emphasis on comfort for potentially choppy terrain, calls for driving restraint on the flat of the open road.

For though the steering is light for what is a big car, and it's still comfy thanks to the usual painstaking Volvo upholstery work, the XC70 can feel ponderous and will wallow on

the bends – maybe one reason why the standard V70 estate outsells it four-to-one in the UK, though it's the reverse on the US market.

But then the XC70 is a real 'lifestyle estate', one that doesn't just look like enabling a huntin', shootin' and fishin' lifestyle, but walks the talk.



It rides more than 7cm higher than a standard V70 and looks bulletproof – opening and closing the doors and tailgate provides the proof.

The cabin is well-made and equipped and thoughtfully arranged, with a 575-litre boot that trounces other AWD estate rivals thanks to a properly upright rear tailgate.

Volvo XC70 D4 AWD (181 PS) Start/Stop SE LUX

Price:	from £38,350
Driving appeal:	★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★
Best rival:	VW Passat Alltrack

Power comes from a smooth diesel line-up, using Volvo's newer four-cylinder D4 unit in various outputs, and the tried and trusted five-pot D5.

Our car was a D4 with 181PS (178.5bhp) on tap, enough to get this hefty car to 62mph in 9.2 seconds.

Not that you want to chuck the XC70 around; this lifestyle estate suits those who like to arrive refreshed and ready to enjoy their country pursuits.

Rivals? If you want a premium badge like the Volvo's then Audi's A6 Allroad is an obvious competitor, albeit with prices from £10k more than the Swede. A more realistic rival is the VW Passat Alltrack (from £30,855), but it looks less substantial than the Volvo – could it live with your real lifestyle?

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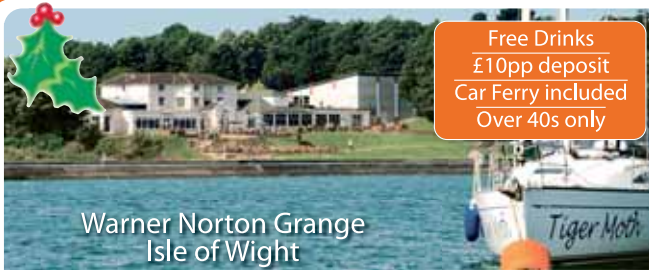
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INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts • Live nightly entertainment • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades available • Return car ferry



Original 70s band Brotherhood of Man
Pontins Pakefield

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Over 40s only

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Mondays: 2 & 9 Nov, 14 Dec, 2015 • 4 nights half board + 99p Drinks, **£125pp** • Quote: TT11/12-KOS

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£1 Drinks • Entertainment
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29 Jan & 5 Feb, 2016 • 2 nights half board-plus, **£129pp** • Quote: WG1/2-KOS

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with Philip Wylie

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Car Ferry included

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INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night • 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts • Live nightly entertainment • Social dancing • Dance demonstrations and tuition • Gala New Year's Eve Ball • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades to main hotel available • Return car ferry crossing Portsmouth-Fishbourne or Lymington-Yarmouth



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Over 40s only • £10pp deposit

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11 March, 2016 • 3 nights half board-plus, **£129pp** • Quote: PS3-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for a Spring Party - for over 40s only - to blow away the winter cobwebs. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring The Ivy League, The Merseybeats and The Pacemakers plus tributes to The Beach Boys and The Beatles. With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and free drinks every night, this is one party weekend you're sure to love.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person per night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • Full 60s theme entertainment programme • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • 3 nights en-suite chalet accommodation - upgrade available



Entertainment
Over 40s only
£10pp deposit

Fab Feb 60s Party at Stoke Rochford Hall, Lincs

26 February, 2016 • 2 nights half board-plus, **£119pp** • Quote: SR2-KOS

Extend your New Year celebrations at Stoke Rochford Hall, near Grantham Lincolnshire. It's a unique hotel housed in a super Victorian country mansion and set in formal landscaped gardens and 28 acres of parkland. There will be entertainment both nights and guests have free access to the hotel's leisure club which provides a state-of-the-art gym, heated covered pool, sauna and steam room.

INCLUDED: 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & tea/coffee tray • 2 dinners & 2 breakfasts • Live entertainment both nights • Free use of leisure facilities (indoor pool & gym)



Entertainment
£10pp deposit

Hotel Piccadilly, Bournemouth

Fridays: 19 Feb, 4 March, 2016 • 3 nights half board, **£119pp** • Quote: B02/3-KOS

The Hotel Piccadilly is proud to be one of the highest rated AA 3-Star hotels in Bournemouth. It is well located in the resort's East Cliff area, a short stroll from the beaches and gardens that separate the pedestrian shopping centre and designer boutiques,

from the sea. All bedrooms are en-suite with TV and tea/coffee making facilities. There will be entertainment provided one night during your stay.

INCLUDED: 3 nights sharing a twin/double room • 3 breakfasts • 3 dinners • Entertainment 1 night

Private Events - You cannot book these self-drive breaks direct with the hotels/resorts

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- Term time only, plus 2 weeks *

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As part of the childcare team, these roles involve providing care and support to the children and young people in childcare teams mornings, evenings and weekends. These roles are aimed at candidates with some experience of Care work.

£14,338 - £15,207 plus 10% pa - 41 hours per week, (including weekends)

- Term time only, plus 2 weeks *

or
£5,246 - £5,564 - 15 hours per week, Weekends only - Term time only, plus 2 weeks *

CHILDCARE SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

As part of the childcare teams, these roles involve providing care and support to the children and young people mornings, evenings and weekends. No experience required, full training will be given.

£11,752 - £12,085 plus 10% pa - 36.5 hours per week, (including weekends - more hours available) - Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

For all posts we look for candidates who are mature, warm, creative and open to learning with a patient and caring attitude to deal sensitively with vulnerable children.

We are committed to sustainability and preserving the environment and therefore encourage applications by email, so for an application form and information pack please email **personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk**.

Or you may call **01843 608727** (24 hour recruitment answer machine).

Please note that CV's will not be considered.

The closing date for all applications is midnight Thursday 22nd October 2015

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Application for New Premises Licence

We Love Sushi Ltd hereby give notice that we have made an application to the Maidstone Borough Council c/o The Licensing Partnership Sevenoaks, The Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG for the grant of a new premises licence to permit:

1. The sale of alcohol and
2. Provision of Late Night Refreshment

In respect of premises located at 60, Earl Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1PS to be known as Love Sushi.

The application can be viewed at the offices of the Licensing Authority, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ between 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. - Monday to Friday (except public holidays) or **www.sevenoaks.gov.uk**

Any representations against this application must be made in writing and received by the Licensing Service at the above address, by no later than 30th October 2015

Any person may make representations on licensing objectives grounds only i.e. the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm. Copies of all representations will be sent to the applicant. It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in or in connection with an application for premises licence and the maximum fine on being convicted of such an offence is £5000. Stephen Thomas LAW, 8, Grassmere, Leybourne, Kent ME19 5QP
Authorised Agents for and on behalf of the applicant.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

999 Logistics Ltd of Triple Nine House, Nipcar Park, London Road, Wrotham, Kent TN15 7RR is applying to change an existing license as follows

To keep an extra 0 goods vehicles and 5 trailers at the operating centre at Triple Nine House, Nipcar Park, London Road, Wrotham, Kent TN15 7RR

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harchills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Notice is hereby given that: Ms Juliet Asemota has applied to Dartford Borough Council for a new Premises Licence pertaining to GLAMOUR KITCHEN, 38 Lowfield Street, Dartford, DA1 1HD. Sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises: Monday to Sunday: 11:00 to 23:00. Any representations from interested parties should be in writing to: The Licensing Section, Dartford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent DA1 1DR, no later than Friday 30th October 2015.

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Shakey raring to go ahead of finale

Shane Byrne is looking to secure his fifth title next weekend



Motorsport

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

SHANE 'Shakey' Byrne says he won't give up his title without a fight as he prepares for next weekend's crunch final round of the MCE British Superbike Championship at Brands Hatch.

The four-time champion is currently second in the championship, behind Australian Josh Brookes, and admits, for one reason or another, things just haven't gone his way this season.

He told KoS: "It has been a really difficult season, lots of different things have gone wrong.

"At times it hasn't been much fun, everything that could conspire against me has done, so you go away and you work even harder, you train even harder over the weekend to get

BYRNE: The Sittingbourne rider is currently second in the championship going into the final round at Brands Hatch

in the best shape possible.

"You think 'what have we got to do to get a bit of luck?' and luck plays a massive part, there's no doubt about that.

"But I don't want to make excuses, all the time there's a mathematical chance we will keep believing."

The Sittingbourne rider is still well in contention for a fifth Superbike title, though, as he returns to his old stomping ground at Brands Hatch.

"Brands has always been my home circuit, it's one I really, really like," he said.

"I've had some wonderful memories there but some big crashes, too.

"I don't think I feel any extra pressure, nobody can put any more pressure on me than I do myself, but I feel the extra support which is really good."

At 38, Shakey is showing no signs

of slowing down, and says there's no chance of him hanging up the gloves and helmet any time soon.

"I've achieved a lot but it's certainly not getting easier, if anything it's getting harder. You've got the guys that are hungry to experience the title for the first time, but I already know how good it feels and I want to do that again and again, so I'm equally as motivated as they are.

"Whatever happens, I will still be the most successful in history, nobody can take that away from me.

"There's always little targets and things I can make happen.

"I remember randomly thinking how cool it would be to get 67 wins, and now I've got 68, which means I can look to try and get 100 or something.

"There's always more for me to do and more to achieve."

World Wheelchair Rugby squad announced

GREAT Britain Wheelchair Rugby has announced the 12 players who have been selected to compete in the BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge at the Copper Box Arena in London.

Kent's Chris Ryan will captain the squad, which also includes: Alan Ash, Coral Batey, Ayaz Bhuta, Jonathan Coggan, Nicholas Cummins, Bulbul Hussain, Paul McDerby, Jim Roberts, Mandip Sehmi, Jamie Stead and Gavin Walker (vice captain).

Performance director for Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby, Lorraine Brown, said: "Our recent Gold medal win at the European Championships means we have qualified for the Paralympic Games in Rio, so this is a really exciting time for GBWR. The BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge



BATTLE: Great Britain will compete for glory at the Copper Box Arena

enables us to play the very best teams in the world and provides valuable preparation for Rio 2016."

David Pond, chief executive of Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby, added: "It is really exciting to bring together the best wheelchair rugby athletes in the world to play in a tournament alongside the Rugby World Cup. We hope this tournament will be repeated in Tokyo alongside the 2019 Rugby World Cup."

The inaugural BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge takes place from October 12 to October 16 at the Copper Box Arena, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and will see London 2012 Paralympic gold medallists Australia, silver medallists Canada and bronze medallists USA battle it out for supremacy against hosts Great Britain as well as New Zealand, South Africa, Japan and France.

Sport Shorts

» Email sports@kosmedia.co.uk or call Tom Pyman on 01233653477

Dover issue response to compensation row

DOVER Athletic have responded to claims they owe compensation for the transfer of winger Toby Ajala from Torquay United.

The club released a statement on its official website just hours after the two sides met in the National League, when Dover moved up to fourth in the table.

The statement read: "Prior to Tuesday night's 3-2 victory at Plainmoor, Dover Athletic chairman Jim Parmenter met with officials from Torquay United and, when the issue was raised, clarified that no compensation was due, as per regulations.

"We have no case to answer in relation to these allegations. We have not used a loophole or acted in an inappropriate or underhanded manner, we have simply applied the regulations that all clubs have to work to.

"We are disappointed that Torquay United have approached the press prior to any discussion on the subject but trust that following clarification of the regulations last night, the matter is closed."



BOSS: Chris Kinnear



GRANT: The club is looking to secure much-needed funding

World's oldest roller hockey club appeal

HERNE Bay Roller Hockey Club is calling on the local community to help secure a grant.

A £5,000 investment is available to the project which receives the most online votes, and the club is the only Kent sports team to be accepted by the grant scheme.

The club, which is the oldest of its type in the world, will use the grant to purchase new goals, nets, sticks and balls as they expand into Thanet and Whitstable, with the sport and the club growing in popularity.

Its under 11 and 13 sides are

national champions, with the latter heading to Barcelona at the end of the month to compete in the under 15 European Championships.

The club missed out on the same grant earlier in the year by just 30 votes, losing out to a telephone box restoration project.

The grant is provided by The One Family Foundation and you can vote for the club at <https://foundation.onefamily.com/projects/get-some-goals-for-herne-bay-roller-hockey-club/>

Voting closes on November 3.

Margate sign midfielder Allen

MARGATE have announced the signing of midfielder Charlie Allen on a six-week deal.

Allen joined the Blues on Monday and featured in the club's Kent Reliance Senior Cup fixture against Tonbridge Angels the following evening at Hartsdown Park, which they lost 2-1.

Manager Terry Brown said: "I am

delighted to see Charlie here. He is the fittest player I know and he will add some much needed legs and hopefully some goals in midfield."

The 23-year-old, son of former Gillingham boss Martin Allen, made 24 appearances for the club last season having previously enjoyed spells at the Gills, Tamworth and Notts County.

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12/12 Plate Vauxhall Corsa 1.3 CDTi SE 5dr, in Red



DRIVE AWAY FOR **£7,995**

12/12 Plate Vauxhall Meriva 1.4 TBO Exclusiv 5dr, in White



DRIVE AWAY FOR **£8,295**

13/13 Plate Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 Exclusiv 5dr, in Grey



DRIVE AWAY FOR **£8,495**

13/13 Plate Ford Fiesta 1.0 Ecoboost Zetec 5dr, in Mustard



DRIVE AWAY FOR **£8,995**

14/14 Plate Vauxhall Astra 1.6 Design 5dr, in Grey



DRIVE AWAY FOR **£9,995**

12/12 Vauxhall Antara 2.2 Exclusiv Auto 5dr, in Grey



DRIVE AWAY FOR **£11,995**

14/14 Vauxhall Mokka 1.6 Exclusiv 5dr, in Blue



DRIVE AWAY FOR **£12,650**

14/64 Vauxhall Astra 1.7 CDTi SRI 5dr, in Black



DRIVE AWAY FOR **£12,995**

14/14 Plate Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi SRI Nav 163PS 5dr, in Black



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